



PANDION Wild Tours

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS IN BULGARIA, GREECE AND ROMANIA



2019

PANDION WILD TOURS

Dear wildlife lovers,

we will be really happy to take you on a virtual journey to Bulgaria using as a vehicle this catalogue of ours.

Our tour agency, “Pandion Wild Tours”, has endeavoured for already 23 years to welcome nature lovers from almost all European countries, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Canada and Japan. We are the oldest and most experienced company for wildlife touring in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is a little country but there is no other like it in Europe: with such a great biodiversity within its small area! More than 250 endemic species of plants exist in Bulgaria along with many more rare and beautiful European ones. A very rich bird fauna, with some of the rarest representatives of European birds. In autumn, during migration, you may enjoy really unforgettable sights watching scores of thousands of migrating large birds of prey, storks and pelicans, hundreds of thousands of smaller migratory birds. And all of them following for millennia one and the same route called from ancient times *Via Pontica* flyway. In winter, you will be able to watch spacious Dobroudzha fields covered not with white blanket of snow but having become reddish with thousands of Red-breasted Geese.

Of mammals one can watch Wolf, Jackal, Brown Bear, Wild Cat, small steppe predators and rodents, and almost all species of European bats.

Rare reptiles and amphibians.

Exceptional diversity of moths and butterflies, many of them extremely rare representatives of European lepidopterans.

Dragonflies: Almost all of the insects of this order are rare European species.

You certainly will be happy to watch also rare European representatives of Spiders, Coleoptera and many other animals.

At the same time you will have the chance to get acquainted with one of the most ancient cultures in the world, namely the rich culture of ancient Scythians – our ancestors, the Thracians.

For those who do not like to travel too much, we can offer family holidays, ornithological and botanical vacations as well as such for those of you who are interested in butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles and amphibians, in our family lodge Pelican Birding Lodge.

And at the end, let us mention the traditional Bulgarian cuisine and the wonderful wine, of which you can enjoy during your stay in Bulgaria.

Be welcome to Bulgaria!

Sincerely yours
Petar Dilchev

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WINTER BIRDING IN BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

2nd–9th February 2019

Best Time: January – February

Ask for more tour dates.

The main wintering grounds for the Red-breasted Goose are located in North-Eastern Bulgaria. For the last 35 years almost the entire stock of the species has spent the winters within the borders of Bulgaria. There is a chance to watch flocks of tens of thousands of **White-fronted** and **Red-breasted geese** and the extremely rare **Lesser White-fronted Goose**. During this tour we will (hopefully) see more than 100 species of other birds, among them the **Dalmatian Pelican**, **White-headed Duck**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Smew** and many others.

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna airport and transfer of about 60 km follows to the small Black Sea town of Kavarna for the next 3 nights. During the transfer we will cross the Balkan mountain range and we will have a couple of possibilities / opportunities for observations along the road.

DAY TWO

After breakfast a visit to the nature reserve of Kaliakra and Bolata Valley and Kamen Briag village. This is a genuine natural steppe for as far as the eye can see there is only grassy plain interspersed with scrub and small stunted trees.



The steppe is traversed by unexpectedly deep valleys. The coast is rocky, with vertical reddish-orange cliffs falling away from over 100 m into the clear bluish green depths of the sea. Here we have the first opportunity to observe the **Red-breasted geese**. We also hope to see **Wren**, **Dunnock**, **Short-eared Owl**, **White-fronted Goose**, **Calandra Lark**, **Crested Lark** and other species. We will take a packed lunch for the day – if the weather permits. After lunch we will make our final visit for the day to Topola cliff – where we hope to see the **Eurasian Eagle Owl**. Dinner and overnight at Kavarna town family hotel.

DAY THREE

A trip to Durankulak Lake and its surrounding areas. A large sandy beach separates the lake from the sea. The lake with its extensive reed-beds and open water is one of the most important wetlands for breeding and migrating birds. Here one can observe the greatest concentration in Europe of the globally threatened **Red-breasted Goose** (up to 53 000 individuals in 2013), and the **White-fronted Goose** (at times up to 250 000 individuals). Other interesting and likely sightings are also the globally threatened **Lesser White-fronted Goose**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Rough-legged Buzzard**, **Calandra Lark** and other species. Packed lunch for the day – if the weather permits. After lunch we will visit Shabla Lake and Tuzlata lake. These areas are also of great importance for migrating and breeding birds. The lakes are separated from the sea by a long sandbar. Dinner and last night at Kavarna town.



Red-breasted Geese



Dalmatian Pelican

© N. Gallos

DAY FOUR

Today, what lies ahead of us is the transfer to the Southern Black-sea coast. We will cross the Stara Planina Mountains (Balkan Range), which in egress sweeps down and touches the sea. Our first short stop for the day will be at Albena forest where we can expect **Grey-headed** and **Black Woodpecker**. Next stop is for our lunch break at the local restaurant of Goritsa village. On the hillside above the road are oak forests. Interesting birds to watch there are: **Great Spotted**, **Middle Spotted**, **Lesser Spotted**, **Green Woodpeckers** and **Short-toed Treecreeper**. Our last stop before arrival is at Banya village where we can observe **buntings**, **Brambling**, **Sombre Tit** and **Wood Lark**. In the late afternoon we will be arriving at the town of Pomorie where we will be accommodated at a local hotel for 3 nights. The hotel is located between the local saltworks and the sea.

DAY FIVE

After breakfast at the hotel's restaurant, our birdwatching day will begin with a few minutes drive to the salt-works at Atanasovsko Lake. We are going to also visit the fresh-water lake of Vaya. All year round dozens of very rare and interesting species of birds can be observed here. Those of greater interest during the winter season are: **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **White-headed Duck** (all three are globally threatened species) **Smew**, **Bittern** and **Great White Egret**. Packed lunch for the day – if the weather permits. Dinner and overnight at Pomorie town.

DAY SIX

After breakfast we will continue our observations in Burgas region. We will visit the protected areas of the fresh-water lake Mandra, Chengene Skele Bay and Foros Bay – which are inhabited by a number of locally and globally endangered bird species. During the day we expect to see the same species as day 6 but also; **Pallas's Gull**, **Whooper Swan**, **Tundra Swan** and **White-tailed Sea Eagle**. Last night at Pomorie town.

DAY SEVEN

Our day will start in the morning with a 4 hour highway transfer to Sofia. During the transfer we will make time for a few more observations along the road – where possible. We will arrive late afternoon and will be accommodated overnight in a most pleasant hotel at the foot of Vitosha Mountain National Park.

DAY EIGHT

After an early breakfast our van will climb up to an altitude of about 2000m a.s.l. whilst in the Nature Park of Vitosha Mountain. Hopefully, there we will watch; **Spotted Nutcracker**, **Red Crossbill**, **Ring Ouzel** and **Fire & Goldcrest**, **Woodpeckers**. Lunch follows before later transfer to Sofia airport and departure.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 780 EUR

Single supp: 150 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 860 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

SPRING BIRDING TOUR BULGARIA AND GREECE

12 DAYS TOUR

19th–30th April 2019

Best Time: Mid April – May

Ask for more tour dates.

DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia Airport and transfer to Pirin Mountains N.P. Accommodation in Bansko for one night. During the transfer visit Rila Monastery for sightseeing and observation of **Pallid Swift**, **Black Redstart**, etc.

DAY TWO

Visit the high mountains of Pirin N.P., hike from 1500 m to 1900 m altitude, following the mountain road between Banderitsa and Vikhren chalets. We expect to see **Nutcracker**, **Ring Ouzel**, **Crossbill**, **Firecrest**, **Goldercrest**, **Dun-nock**, **Alpine Chough**. In the afternoon we travel to Kerkini Lake, in Greece. We'll spend two nights in the small village of Khrizokhorafa, next to Kerkini Lake. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY THREE

Today, we'll visit Kerkini Lake. We expect to see **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Little Bittern**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Spoonbill**, **Little Egret**, **Great White Egret**, **Night Heron**, **Squacco Heron**, **Red-necked** and **Black-necked grebes**, plus many shorebird species. Night at local hotel.



DAY FOUR

We leave the Kerkini Lake region and travel east, and after about 200 km we reach the region of the village of Keramoti, situated at the Mediterranean seashore. We'll visit the local lagoons Eratino and Aglasmatos, where we expect to see **avocets**, **Black-winged Stilt**, and more shorebird species. Accommodation for one night at a local hotel in Keramoti.

DAY FIVE

After breakfast we are ready to leave the region, but before that we'll try to find and see the local specialty, **Spur-winged Lapwing**. After that we travel again to the east and by early afternoon we reach the Porto Lagos Lagoons. We'll first visit Alikes, Lafrouda and Almira lagoons, where we have another possibility to find **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Gull-billed Tern**, reed warbler species and more shorebird species. In the late afternoon we arrive at the village of Fanari, where accommodation in a local hotel for two nights follows.

DAY SIX

Today we'll continue our birding tour, visiting the Lagos, Xirolimni, Aliko, and Ptelea lagoons. We expect to see more shorebird species, reed warbler species, **Caspian Tern**, **White Pelican**, and **White-winged**, **Black** and **Whiskered Tern**, **Gull-billed Tern**, etc.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast we travel to the north, cross the town of Komotih and the Bulgarian border, and after about 2.5 hours we arrive at the Bulgarian city of Krumovgrad, where accommodation for three nights follows. The town is situated in the ancient volcanic region of the Eastern Rodopi Mountains.

DAY EIGHT

Today we'll visit the vulture feeding site of Potochnitsa. This is an open and very rocky area. We expect to see **Egyptian Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Black Kite**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, migrating harriers, and many small birds such as **Alpine Swift**, **Subalpine**, **Sardinian**, **Orphean**, and **Barred warblers**, **Whitethroat** and **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Woodchat**, **Red-backed** and **Lesser**



© J. Koutisarov

Spur-winged Lapwing

Grey shrikes, etc. In the afternoon we visit the rocky river valley of Dolna Kula, where we expect to see **Black Stork, Black-headed Bunting, Ortolan Bunting, Eastern Black-eared Wheatear, Cirl Bunting, Rock Thrush and Blue Rock Thrush, Rock Nuthatch, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle**, and many others. Later when it gets dark, we'll try to find **Scops Owl**. Packed lunch for the day. Night at Krumovgrad hotel.

DAY NINE

After an early breakfast we'll visit the breeding territory of **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, and we hope to see this impressive bird. During the day we also expect to see **Olive-tree Warbler, Olivaceous Warbler, Masked Shrike, Lesser Kestrel, Lesser Spotted Eagle**. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY TEN

We leave the Eastern Rodopi Mountains and we travel west to reach Trigrad Gorge. During the transfer we'll stop a few times and we expect to see **Rock Bunting, Woodpecker species, Little Owl, and Black Stork**. Late afternoon we arrive at the village of Trigrad, where accommodation in a local hotel for one night follows. If we have time, we'll visit Trigrad Gorge, looking for the extremely beautiful **Wallcreeper**.

DAY ELEVEN

In the morning we'll continue to look for **Wallcreeper**. Lunch in the local mountain inn.

Late afternoon we leave the Rodoipi Mountains, driving north, We cross the Thracian Valley and Sredna Gora mountain range, and we arrive at historic museum town of Koprivshtitsa. We'll spend our last night at a local hotel. During the transfer we have a good possibility to have last look at **Lesser Spotted, Booted,**

Short-toed, and even **Eastern Imperial eagles**. Smaller birds that we expect to see are buntings, shrikes, pipits, **Roller, Bee-eater, Hoopoe**, etc. Final dinner.

DAY TWELVE

After breakfast transfer to Sofia Airport follows. Our tour ends.

Group size:	5-15 + leader
Land only price:	1250 EUR
Single supp:	170 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1410 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Great Flamingo

SPRING BIRDING IN BULGARIA

10 DAYS TOUR

24th May – 2nd June 2019

Best Time: May – Mid June

Ask for more tour dates.

Bulgaria, with its biodiversity, is indeed a unique land. Within its borders and during certain periods of the year, one can watch at one and the same time both Mediterranean species of birds and birds that nest in the far-away Siberia. We will visit many marshes and lakes, the riversides of the majestic river Danube, and the ancient Black Sea as well as the extremely diverse habitats of Sakar and Rodopi Mountains. Apart from the beautifully looking **Golden Oriole, Bee-Eater, Roller, Hoopoe, Wallcreeper** we expect to see such rare European species like **Dalmatian and White Pelicans, Pygmy Cormorant, Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck**, many species of **Waders and Plovers, Black- and White-winged Terns**. Also, large birds of prey like **Golden Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, White-tailed Sea Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Masked Shrike, Sombre Tit, Isabeline- and Pied Wheatears, Olive-tree- and Paddifield warblers, Semi-collared Flycatcher, Balkan-, Black-headed-, Yellow Wagtails** and many others. We will see about, and more likely over, 200 species of birds. During the entire tour conditions for taking pictures of species from the flora and fauna of the country will be good enough.



Black-headed Bunting



DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia Airport and transfer to Rodopi Mountains. We will have several breaks to relax and rest a bit and have a look at the first representatives of Bulgarian bird-fauna, namely **Red-backed Shrike, Black-headed Bunting, White Stork, Honey Buzzard**, etc. At dusk, we will put up at a small family hotel in Trigrad village.

DAY TWO

After breakfast, we'll pack up and head for a magnificent Trigrad gorge. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE **WALLCREEPER**. This is simply the best and the most accessible place in Europe or maybe in the world to see this marvellous bird, which reminds an enormous butterfly in flight. It is here, where we hope to see this wonderful bird. After lunch in the local mountain hut, we will travel to the rocky area of Krumovgrad town. The world of the large birds of prey lies before us. Accommodation for 2 nights at local hotel.

DAY THREE

The next visit is to a rocky region close to our hotel. The area is of ancient volcanic origin with stony ground, huge rocks scattered around, small stunted shrubs and almost complete lack of wild-growing mature trees. Hopefully, we'll see **Golden-, Eastern Imperial-, Booted-, and Short-toed eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Black-, Egyptian-, and Griffon Vultures** and many species of smaller birds like **Pallid Swift, Rock Nuthatch, Rock-, and Blue Rock thrushes, Roller, Bee-eater, Red-rumped Swallow, Lesser Grey and Woodchat shrikes, Sombre Tit, Cirl, Black-headed and Ortolan buntings, Barred-, Subalpine-, Sardinian-, and Orphean warblers**.

DAY FOUR

Long but necessary transfer follows, this time to the lowlands along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. We will stay for 2 nights at a local hotel in Pomorie town. While still on the move, we will have plenty of time for stops to look for specialties like **Eastern Imperial Eagle, Masked Shrike, Olive-tree Warbler, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Montagu's Harrier**.

DAY FIVE

In the morning, we will be in the area around the Bourgas lakes (Ramsar and IBA sites), with the extensive reed-beds on their lakesides. There are flooded

meadows, marshes, low hills, and oak forests in the surrounding countryside. These diverse habitats make this region one of the best in Europe for wetland and other species of birds. There we can spot **Pygmy Cormorant**, all European species of **herons** and **egrets**, **White Pelican**, **Slender-billed-**, **Mediterranean-**, and **Little gulls**, **Avocet**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Grey-headed-**, and **Middle Spotted woodpeckers**, **White-tailed Sea Eagle**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Honey Buzzard**, **Short-toed Eagle**.

DAY SIX

We head north along the Black Sea coast where we will spend the night at a local hotel in Kavarna town. Two nice wooded valleys can be seen from the hotel. Very good opportunities to watch **Golden Oriole**, **Bee-eater**, **Roller**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Hobby**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**. On the way north we will stop at an oak forest, where we will concentrate on spotting woodpeckers and **Semi-collared Flycatcher**. Lunch at the local restaurant.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, follows a visit to Dourankoulak Lake. Here we will be most interested to spot **Paddyfield Warbler**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Gull-billed-**, and **Caspian terns**, **Red-footed Falcon**. After the packed lunch we'll visit Kaliakra steppe reserve region for **Calandra-**, and **Short-toed larks**, **Isabeline-**, and **Pied wheatears** and **Stone Curlew**. This is also the region, where sometimes the **Rosy starlings** appear during their periodic invasions. About 4 p.m. we drive inland and will cross Dobrudza steppes to reach the Danube river valley. Accommodation for 2 nights at Pelican Birding Lodge, situated in Vetren village, Silistra district.

DAY EIGHT

Today we will visit the Managed Reserve "Lake Srebarna". The reserve is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Its extensive reed-beds give perfect shelter for globally threatened with extinction **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Ferruginous duck**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Red-necked-**, and **Black-necked grebes**, **herons**, **Marsh Harrier**, **Penduline Tit** to breed. The **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Goshawk** breed in the broad-leaved forests around the lake. The **Ruddy Shelduck** also breeds in the banks of the small dry valleys around the lakes.

DAY NINE

Driving west along the Danube we'll visit a marshland for watching **Whiskered-**, **White-winged-**, and **Black terns**, **Red-necked-**, **Black-necked-**, **Little-**, and **Great Crested grebes**.

We will stay overnight at the Etara: an open air ethnographic museum, at the Balkan Range. Here is one of the last opportunities on this trip to see the **White-throated Dipper**, and some more **Woodpeckers**.

DAY TEN

After breakfast, we will set off for Sofia where our tour will come to its end.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 1000 EUR

Single supp: 170 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 1100 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Eastern Imperial Eagle

© L. Andreev & Greenbalkans

WALLCREEPER & VULTURES – BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

25th May – 1st June 2019

Best Time: May – Mid July

Ask for more tour dates.

DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia airport and transfer to Trigrad village. Accommodation at the family guest house for 2 nights. Dinner. Along the road we will have a few stops with good opportunities to spot **Rock Bunting**, **White Stork**, **Honey Buzzard**, **Hoopoe**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Red-backed Shrike**, etc.

DAY TWO

After the breakfast, we'll visit the magnificent Trigrad Gorge. One can hardly imagine the gorge beauty if one does not see it with one's own eyes. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE **WALL-CREEPER**. This is simply the best and the most easily accessible place in Europe or maybe in the world, to see this marvellous bird, which reminds an enormous butterfly in flight. Other possible birds for the day: **Black-**, **Grey-headed-**, **Great Spotted woodpeckers**, **Alpine-**, and **Pallid swifts**, **Red-rumped Swallow**, **Crag Martin**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Nutcracker**, **Hobby**, etc.



Wallcreeper

© M. Lane



DAY THREE

After breakfast, we will travel to Eastern Rodopi Mountains. The area is dry and very rocky. The world of the large birds of prey lies before us. Accommodation for 5 nights at a local hotel in Krumovgrad town. There are good opportunities to watch **Black-**, and **White storks**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Lesser Grey Shrike**, **Scops Owl**.

DAYS FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN

The next four days we'll visit different sites in the region of Krumovgrad town. Rocky gorges, small woods and shrubs, river beds. The area is of ancient volcanic origin with stony ground, huge rocks scattered around, small stunted shrubs and almost complete lack of wild-growing mature trees. This part of the Rodopi Mountains is well known as one of Europe's most important regions for birds of prey. We will spend all four days bird-watching around and hopefully will see **Golden-**, **Eastern Imperial-**, **Booted-**, **Lesser spotted-**, and **Short-toed eagles**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Black-**, **Egyptian-**, and **Griffon vultures** and many species of smaller birds like **Pallid Swift**, **Rock Nuthatch**, **Rock-**, and **Blue Rock thrushes**, **Roller**, **Bee-eater**, **Lesser Grey-**, **Masked-**, **Red-backed-**, and **Woodchat shrikes**, **Sombre Tit**, **Cirl-**, **Black-headed-**, and **Ortolan buntings**, **Barred-**, **Subalpine-**, **Sardinian-**, and **Orpheap warblers**.

DAY EIGHT

After an early breakfast, we travel to Sofia town, where our tour is over.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 770 EUR

Single supp: 150 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 885 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:
ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:
airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

THE DANUBE DELTA, BLACK SEA COAST & THE BIRDS OF DOBRUDZHA – BULGARIA & ROMANIA

12 DAYS TOUR

26th May – 6th June 2019

24th August – 4th September 2019

Best Time:

May – June

August – September

Ask for more tour dates.

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna airport and transfer to the village of Vetren, located in the immediate vicinity of the Danube and the world famous reserve “Lake Srebarna”. The reserve is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Accommodation at Pelican Birding Lodge for 5 nights.

DAY TWO

All day long we’ll be in the region, making observations around Srebarna lake reserve. Possible bird species for the day: **Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous Duck, Pygmy Cormorant, herons and egrets, Marsh Harrier, Penduline Tit, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Ruddy Shelduck.** In the afternoon, we will visit the Danube River proper. Birds likely to be seen there: **Dalmatian Pelican, herons, woodpeckers.**

Rose-coloured
Starling



DAY THREE

After breakfast, we set off for the rocky canyon of the Souhata Reka. The cliffs forming the canyon are perforated by a great number of rock niches and caverns, which today are inhabited by interesting bird species like the **Black Stork, Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Booted Eagle.** We are going to see smaller birds like **Roller, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Golden Oriole, Barred Warbler** and many other species of birds. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will visit the quite new Nature Reserve “Nova Cherna”. It gives shelter to such interesting species of birds like **White-winged-, Black- and Whiskered terns, Red-necked- and Black-necked grebes,** almost all of the **European herons and egrets, Great Reed Warbler** and many other species. During the trip to the marsh, we will visit some other, smaller water bodies where, hopefully, we will see **Ruddy Shelduck,** and in their vicinity **Booted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Lesser-spotted Eagle.**

DAY FIVE

It is time to visit the rocky valley (canyon) of river Roussenski Lom. This area is a nature park, and its beautiful riverside terraces, tall cliffs, caves, rock formations, high biodiversity and many historical monuments make it an exceptionally interesting destination for visitors. We will hopefully see **Black Stork, Long-legged Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Egyptian Vulture, Honey Buzzard** and many other species of birds.

DAY SIX

Today, we will leave the Danube riverside and head east for the Northern Black Sea coast. During the transfer, we’ll stop for watching birds and, hopefully, we will see **Black-headed- and Ortolan Bunting, Lesser Grey Shrike.** Around

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noon, we’ll have already arrived at the coast and will immediately head for the nature reserve “Kaliakra”. “Cape Kaliakra Steppe Nature Reserve” is a coastal headland. Inland, the sky above the rolling steppe is dotted with slow-flapping **Calandra- and Short-toed larks.** The habitat also suits **Isabeline- and Pied wheatears** and **Stone Curlew.** We hope to see also **Rosy starlings.** Accommodation at Kavarna town hotel for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, a visit to Dourankoulak Lake follows. It’s a very important wetland area for the breeding, migrating and wintering birds. Here, we will be most interested to spot **Paddyfield Warbler, Collared Pratincole, Ferruginous Duck, Gull-billed- and Caspian terns, Red-footed Falcon, Long-legged Buzzard.** In the afternoon we will visit Yaylata archaeological reserve to look for **Isabeline- and Pied wheatears.**

DAY EIGHT

We’ll head north (180 km) along the Black Sea coast and cross the border with Romania and in about 3 hours drive we arrive at the village of Murigiol, where our Romanian colleagues will be waiting for us. Our trip continues by boat transfer to the center of the Danube Delta, where our hotel is located. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights. During the transfer, we’ll see many **herons,** hopefully flocks of **White pelicans** and other water birds.

DAYS NINE & TEN

For the next two days we’ll travel only by boats, following the existing net of channels in the Delta. We expect to see **Caspian Tern, flocks of White Pelican,** all of the European species of **herons & egrets, Graylag Goose, White-tailed Sea Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Grey-headed- and Black woodpeckers, Spotted and Little Crake** and many other species of birds.

DAY ELEVEN

Today, we will travel back to Bulgaria. Our trip starts by boat. We’ll make our last birdwatching from the boat and we’ll have the opportunity to see the species from the previous two days. In the late afternoon, we will arrive at our hotel in the town of Kavarna, where we’ll have our last dinner and night there.

DAY TWELVE

After breakfast and depending on the flight schedule we can make one last birdwatching stroll in the region, and then follows a transfer to Varna Airport where our tour comes to its end.



White-tailed
Sea Eagle

© R. Tsvetkov

Group size: 5–10 + leader	
Land only price:	1400 EUR
Single supp:	300 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1500 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

AUTUMN BIRDING IN BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

31st August – 7th September 2019

24th September – 1st October 2019

Best Time: **September – Mid October**

Ask for more tour dates.

Every autumn thousands of birds perform their annual migration and follow irreversibly one and the same route. A route bearing from ancient times the name “*Via Pontica*”. Every year along Bulgarian Black-sea coast migrate scores of thousands of **storks, pelicans**, larger and smaller **birds of prey** and hundreds of thousands of **songbirds, waders, plovers** and other birds. We can see more than 150 species of birds, among them the **Broad-billed-**, and **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Temminck’s Stint**, **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Bee-eater**, **Hoopoe**, **Roller**, **Golden Oriole**, **Caspian Tern**, **Pied Wheatear**, **Pallid-**, and **Montague’s Harrier**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Booted eagle**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Red-footed Falcon**, etc.

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna Airport (Northern Black-sea coast), then transfer to the village of Vetren, municipality of Silistra. Accommodation at Pelican Birding Lodge for 2 nights. The village is located in immediate vicinity to the majestic river Danube and the worldwide-renowned Managed Reserve of the Biosphere “Lake Srebarna”, which is under UNESCO’s aegis as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Dinner follows and night at the Lodge.

DAY TWO

On this day, we are going to visit the reserve Srebarna and besides, we will climb the surrounding hills in order to watch the migration of large and small species of birds. We expect to see **Bee-eater**, **Hoopoe**, **Roller**, **Golden Oriole**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Red-footed Falcon**, **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant** and many other species. Packed lunch for the day. Dinner at the Pelican Birding Lodge.

DAY THREE

Ahead of us lies a transfer to the Northern Black-sea coast. During the trip we’ll make several stops for watching birds, mainly migrating birds of prey. Being at the coast we’ll be watching birds in the steppes of the reserve Kaliakra. The coast is rocky with abrupt, white and reddish-orange cliffs falling away from over 200m into the clear bluish-green depths of the sea below. Interesting bird species to watch there: **White pelicans**, **Black storks**, **Lesser Spotted-**, **Booted-**, and **Short-toed eagles**, the four species of European **harriers**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Red-footed Falcon**. Thousands of small birds. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will visit the lake Dourankoulak. A large sandy beach separates the lake from the sea. The lake is one of the most important wetlands for migrating and breeding birds. We expect to see again a multitude of large **birds of prey**, **pelicans**, **Black storks** and many other smaller migrants.

DAY FIVE

Today, what lies ahead of us is the transfer to the Southern Black-sea coast. We will cross the Stara Planina Mountains (Balkan Range) which, in this last part of its, sweeps



down and touches the sea. On the hills, on the upside of the road, there are oak forests. Interesting birds to see there are: **Great Spotted-**, **Middle Spotted-**, **Lesser Spotted woodpeckers**, **Green-** and **Grey-headed woodpeckers**, **Black Woodpecker**, **Short-toed Treecreeper**. In the late afternoon, we will be arriving at the town of Pomorie, where we will be accommodated at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY SIX

This day will start with a visit to the local salt-works where, hopefully, we will be able to see some representatives of waders and plovers. Then we will visit the Bourgas lakes and their surroundings. We shall witness spectacular sights to remember for life: tens of thousands of **pipits**, **wagtails**, **larks**, thousands of **pelicans**, **Honey buzzards** and **buzzards**, **Lesser Spotted eagles**. Hundreds of **Red-footed falcons**, **kestrels**, **Levant sparrowhawks**, a lot of **Short-toed eagles**, **Booted eagles**, and – if we have a good luck – **Pallid Harrier**, **Saker**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Spotted Eagle**.

DAY SEVEN

During all that day we will walk around Bourgas salt-works, where we will stop at several spots to watch birds. We expect to see both local non-migratory species like the **Bearded Tit**, and many species of **waders** and **plovers** as well as a lot of migrants like **pelicans**, **Honey buzzards** and **buzzards**, **Lesser Spotted eagles**, **Short-toed-**, and **Booted eagles**, **Red-footed falcons**, **Levant sparrowhawks**.

DAY EIGHT

The final birdwatching round in the region will be followed by a transfer to Varna airport and departure.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 850 EUR

Single supp: 150 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 950 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

BROWN BEARS & BIRDS

5 DAYS TOUR

27th April – 1st May 2019

1st – 5th September 2019

Best Time: **April –May, September**

Ask for more tour dates.

No less than 180 species of mammals populate Europe. For Bulgaria they number over 100 species, among which are such rare European examples as the **Brown Bear**, **Wolf**, **Jackal**, all species of European **bats** and small steppe mammals among others. It should be noted that our country is inhabited by one of the most stable European populations of the **Brown Bear**: a species found present on almost all of Bulgaria’s mountain-ranges.

During our tour we will be situated at the very heart of the wonderful and mystical Rhodope Mountains. The Rhodopes are considered one of the most biodiverse areas in the whole of Europe housing more than 20 nature resorts. The mountain is rich not only in wildlife but steeped in history, culture and countless legends as well. It is believed that this is the birthplace of the mythical and legendary figure of Orpheus.

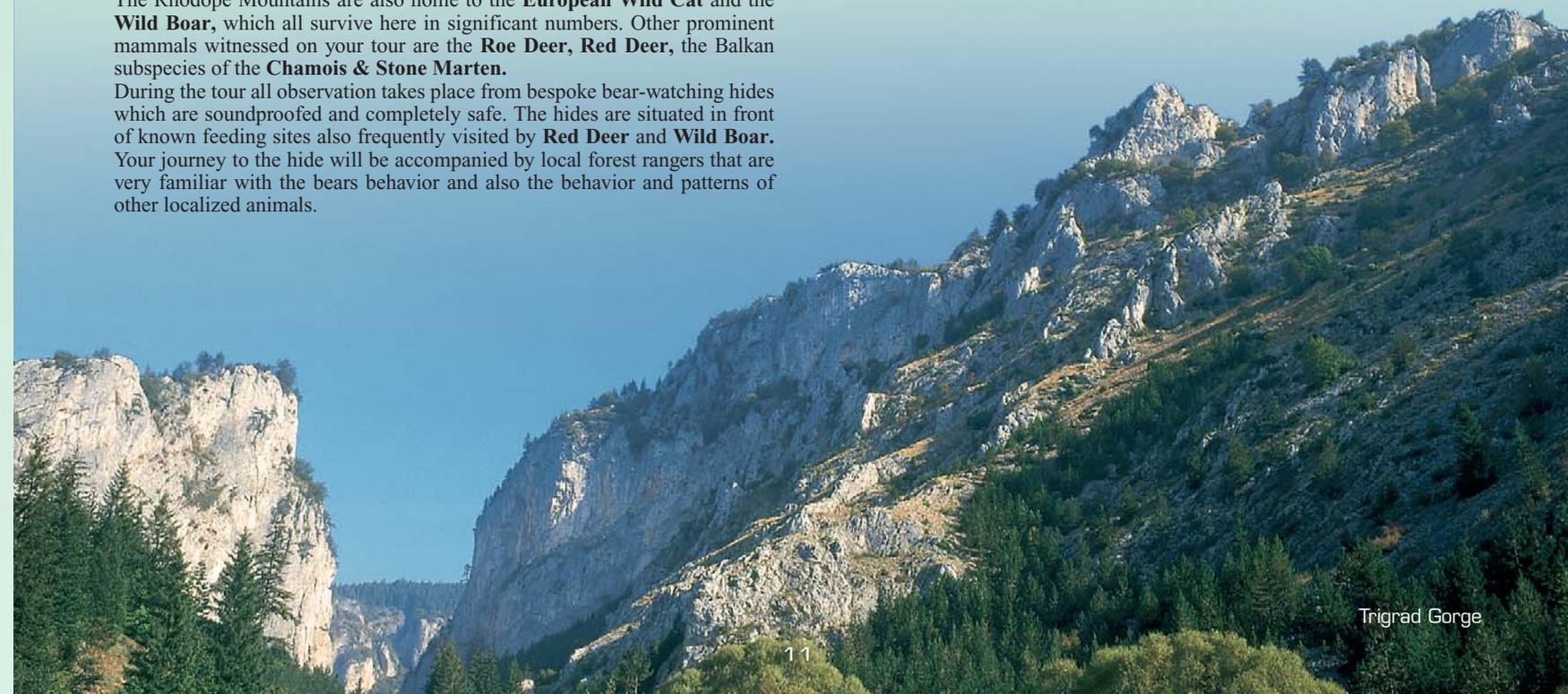
Whilst previously, the entire territory of Europe was populated by bears, today only Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden and Finland find themselves inhabited by stable populations. For Bulgaria, the Rila-Rhodope Massif is inhabited by approximately 450–550 bears (including cubs) and the Rhodopes offer you with the highest chance of seeing such a Bear in Bulgaria.

The Rhodope Mountains are also home to the **European Wild Cat** and the **Wild Boar**, which all survive here in significant numbers. Other prominent mammals witnessed on your tour are the **Roe Deer**, **Red Deer**, the Balkan subspecies of the **Chamois & Stone Marten**.

During the tour all observation takes place from bespoke bear-watching hides which are soundproofed and completely safe. The hides are situated in front of known feeding sites also frequently visited by **Red Deer** and **Wild Boar**. Your journey to the hide will be accompanied by local forest rangers that are very familiar with the bears behavior and also the behavior and patterns of other localized animals.



Our main focus will be on the bears, but the huge variety of bird diversity within the Western Rhodopes should not be underestimated as nearly 150 species breed here. There is a good chance to see the **Wallcreeper**: for here you find one of the most notorious and accessible places in Europe for observing this marvelous bird. Other possible species of birds found are; **Black**, **Grey-headed**, **Great Spotted & Green woodpeckers**, **Alpine & Pallid swifts**, **Red-rumped Swallow**, **Crag Martin**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Nutcracker**, **Hobby**, **Hazel Grouse**, **Buzzard** and occasionally **Golden Eagle** and **European Crested Tit** – among others.



DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia Airport and transfer to the small village of Trigrad at the very heart of Rhodope Mountains. During your journey we take a few breaks that afford good opportunity to spot **Rock Bunting, White Stork, Honey Buzzard, Hoopoe, Syrian Woodpecker & Red-backed Shrike** for example.

Throughout the following four days you will be accommodated at a local hotel situated in a fabulous location in a quiet and remote area. After an early dinner consisting of traditional Bulgarian dishes, we will make a 20 km transfer in 4x4 vehicles to our specially secured observation hides from where we expect to see our first animals of the tour. Our observations will continue until 22 hrs or even later, depending on our guest's wishes. Of course; the longer we stay in the hides the more we increase our chances to see bears and other animals. On conclusion, transfer back to our overnight hotel in Trigrad.

As our visits to the special hides will take place in the late afternoon, during the day we will have great opportunities to explore the bird diversity of the region.

DAY TWO

After breakfast we embark on a long walk along the magnificent Trigrad Gorge. The first thing that impresses the visitor are the huge vertical cliffs towering above and the deep rocky valley below where the meandering Trigrad river can be seen. Strange trees of a local subspecies of **Black Pine** (*Pinus nigra*) grow straight out of the rocks absent of soil for their roots. We are certain that while you are there: you will stand in awe before such magnificent grandeur. Unfortunately this description cannot do justice to this most extraordinary place, with its caverns and rumble of waterfalls as witnessed first-hand. One can hardly imagine the outstanding natural beauty of this gorge if one does not see it with one's own eyes. Walking along the gorge we will focus on the vertical cliffs for the **Wallcreeper** which presents itself as almost an enormous butterfly in flight. During the day we will also have the chance to enter and explore the legendary Devil's Throat Cave. Since ancient times there have been folklore tales of Orpheus descending into the kingdom of the dead, ruled by God Hades, through this exact cave to search for his beloved Euredice. We will take lunch out at a local mountain hut where you will have the opportunity to taste the most delicious local trout. We continue with our exploration until early afternoon before heading off to the hotel for a short rest and early dinner. After dinner a transfer in 4x4 vehicles to the Bear hides follows. We will visit the hide from day one (or other suitable hide situated locally), depending on our forest ranger's sound advice of where best to find the bears that day.

Expected mammals to be seen are; **Brown Bear, Wild Boar, Roe Deer, Red Deer**. Possible birds include; **Black, Grey-headed, Great Spotted woodpeckers, Alpine & Pallid swifts, Red-rumped Swallow, Crag Martin, Peregrine, Nutcracker & Hobby** etc.

DAY THREE

After breakfast you will have the choice to visit the nearby architectural and folklore reserve of the village Shiroka Luka, or alternatively visit different sites for bird-watching in the surrounding area. The village of Shiroka Luka is a living museum village with authentic Rhodopean houses. Shiroka Luka is also famous for its traditions of folklore music and dance. During the afternoon we'll have an early dinner at about 5 o'clock P.M. at our hotel. It is best by 6 P.M. (at the latest) to return to the hides again for our final observation.

DAY FOUR

The day will start with a very early breakfast as today holds in store a planned walking tour. We will drive towards the town of Devin (approximately one hour), from where we will continue on foot (5-6 Kilometers) in search of other wild animals. We will visit remote areas in the region where we expect to see **Chamois, Roe Deer, Red Deer and Wild Boar**, and if we are lucky: **wolves**. We will rest and have a picnic lunch during the walk. There will be many good opportunities to watch: **Black, Green Woodpecker, Hazel Grouse and Buzzard**, and sometimes **Golden Eagle, European Crested Tit** and others. Late afternoon we will drive back to our hotel in Trigrad village for our last overnight sleep.

DAY FIVE

Depending on flight departure times, we assure you we will take every opportunity along the return route to Sofia for some final bird watching.

Group size: 4-5 + leader

Land only price: 650 EUR

Single supp: 110 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 830 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



© V. Pochekanski

Brown Bear

JUNE BUTTERFLY TOUR – BULGARIA

9 DAYS TOUR

8th – 16th June 2019

Best Time: June

Ask for more tour dates.

The present butterfly fauna has formed as a consequence of diverse climatic conditions, relief, soil texture and vegetation as well as the presence of refuges where, during the ice age, relic species have been preserved or endemic species have formed. This fauna of Bulgaria is the richest one among all European countries, outside the Mediterranean zone: currently **218 species** have been reliably registered for our country.

DAY ONE

The tour starts at Bulgarian capital city of Sofia with a transfer to the little old-time town of Melnik. Accommodation at a small local hotel for 3 nights. While travelling to Melnik, there will be a short stop in Kresna Gorge. Likely species to be seen are **Krueper's Small White** (*Pieris krueperi*), **Iolas Blue** (*Iolana iolas*), **Eastern Baton Blue** (*Pseudophilotes vicrama schiffermuelleri*), **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta schiffermulleri*), **Jerusalem Fritillary** (*Melitaea ornata*), **Nettle Tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*), **Frivaldsky's White-banded Grayling** (*Pseudochazara anthelea amalthea*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*), **Sandy Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus cinarae*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), *Hemaris croatica*.

DAY TWO

Walk and observations in the area of the town of Melnik and Rozhen Monastery. We'll look for the following species: **Plebeius sephirus**, **Hungarian Glider** (*Neptis rivularis*), **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Nettle Tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*), **Lattice Brown** (*Pararge roxelana*), **Eastern Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia syriaca*), **Gatekeeper** (*Pyronia tithonus*).

DAY THREE

Observations in the area of an extinct volcano known as Kozhuh Hill – a rocky and very dry place. More interesting species likely to be seen there are: **Powdered Brimstone** (*Gonepteryx farinosa*), **Freyer's Purple Emperor** (*Apatura metis*), **Scarce Tortoiseshell** (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*), **Tree Grayling** (*Hipparchia statilinus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*), **Oriental Meadow Brown** (*Hyponephele lupina*), **Russian Heath** (*Coenonympha leander*), **Oriental Marbled Skipper** (*Carcharodus orientalis*), **Inky Skipper** (*Erynnis marloyi*), **Mediterranean Skipper** (*Gegenes nostradamus*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*).

DAY FOUR

Driving to Trigrad village for observations. On the way to Trigrad, the first stop is in Popovi Livadi meadows. Species to observe are **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), **Black-veined White** (*Aporia crataegi*), **Common Brimstone** (*Gonepteryx rhamni*), **Alcon Large Blue** (*Maculinea alcon*), **Turquoise Blue** (*Polyommatus dorylas*),



Polyommatus nephohtamenos, **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Balkan Fritillary** (*Boloria graeca*), **Ottoman Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia ottomana*), **Eastern Large Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Scarce Copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Mazarine Blue** (*Polyommatus semiargus*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*), **Idas Blue** (*Plebeius idas*), **Northern Brown Argus** (*Aricia artaxerxis*), **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea ploebe*), **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitea athalia*), **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria silene*), etc. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.



Apollo
Parnassius apollo



Southern White Admiral
Limenitis reducta

DAY FIVE

Observations in the vicinity of Trigrad village. More interesting species likely to be seen in the area: **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*), **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*), **Alcon Large Blue** (*Maculinea alcon*), **Blue Argus** (*Aricia anteros*), **Zephyr Blue** (*Plebeius sephirus*), **Higgins's Anomalous Blue** (*Polyommatus nophiptamenos*), **Esher's Blue** (*Polyommatus esheri*), **Poplar Admiral** (*Limenitis populi*), **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*), **Balkan Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Woodland Ringlet** (*Erebia medusa*), **Bright Eyed Ringlet** (*Erebia oeme*), **Chequered Skipper** (*Carterocephalus palaemon*).

DAY SIX

Today, after breakfast, we leave the Trigrad Gorge and head east. We will make some observations in the surroundings of "Smoljanski ezera" lakes, located at an altitude of 1500m asl. Species likely to be observed there are **Scarce Copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Holly Blue** (*Celastrina argiolus*), **Large Ringlet** (*Erebia euryale*), **Arran Brown** (*Erebia ligea*), **Eastern Large Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria euphrosyne*), **Weaver's Fritillary** (*Boloria dia*), **Marbled Fritillary** (*Brenthis daphne*), **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*), **Amanda's Blue** (*Polyommatus amandus*), etc. After lunch, a transfer to Krumovgrad town follows. This town is located in Eastern Rodopi Mountains. This part of the mountains differs radically from their central part. It is of volcanic origin, with huge crags and rocks all over the area as far as the eye can see. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY SEVEN

Observations in the area. The landscape is very unusual and at places resembles the moon surface. The high-water river Arda cuts across the area. We are in the real crater of an extinct volcano: everything around is covered with basalt. The view is so gorgeous that you will remember it for life. More interesting species likely to be seen there: **Eastern Wood White** (*Leptidea duponcheli*), **Southern Small White** (*Pieris manni*), **Kreuper's Small White** (*Pieris kreuperi*), **Small Bath White** (*Pontia chloridice*), **Lesser Fiery Copper** (*Lycaena thersamon*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*).

DAY EIGHT

Today, we'll visit the town of Madzharovo and its surroundings, and the area along Arda River valley. This place differs somewhat from the one we visited the previous day – there is more greenery and small deciduous woods where the oak trees dominate. And yet the huge basalt cliffs are still around us. More interesting species likely to be seen: **Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow** (*Colias erate*), **Blue Argus** (*Aricia anteros*), **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta schiffmulleri*), **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Twin-spot Fritillary** (*Brenthis hecate*), **Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea didyma*), *Melitaea punica*, **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*), **Lattice Brown** (*Pararge roxelana*), **Eastern Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia syriaca*), **Tree Grayling** (*Hipparchia statilinus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*).

DAY NINE

After an early breakfast, follows transfer to Sofia. And here our tour ends.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 900 EUR
Single supp: 180 EUR
Deposit: 150 EUR
Individuals: 1020 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

JULY BUTTERFLY TOUR – BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

6th – 13th July 2019

Best Time: July – Mid August

Ask for more tour dates.

The present butterfly fauna has been formed as a consequence of diverse climatic conditions, relief, soil texture and vegetation as well as the presence of refuges where, during the ice age, relic species have been preserved or endemic species have formed. This fauna of Bulgaria is the richest one among all European countries, outside the Mediterranean zone: currently **218 species** have been reliably registered for our country.

DAY ONE

The tour starts at Bulgarian capital city of Sofia with transfer to the small mountain town of Koprivshitsa located at the foot of Sredna Gora Range. During the transfer, we will carry out our first observations. Accommodation for 2 nights at a local hotel.

DAY TWO

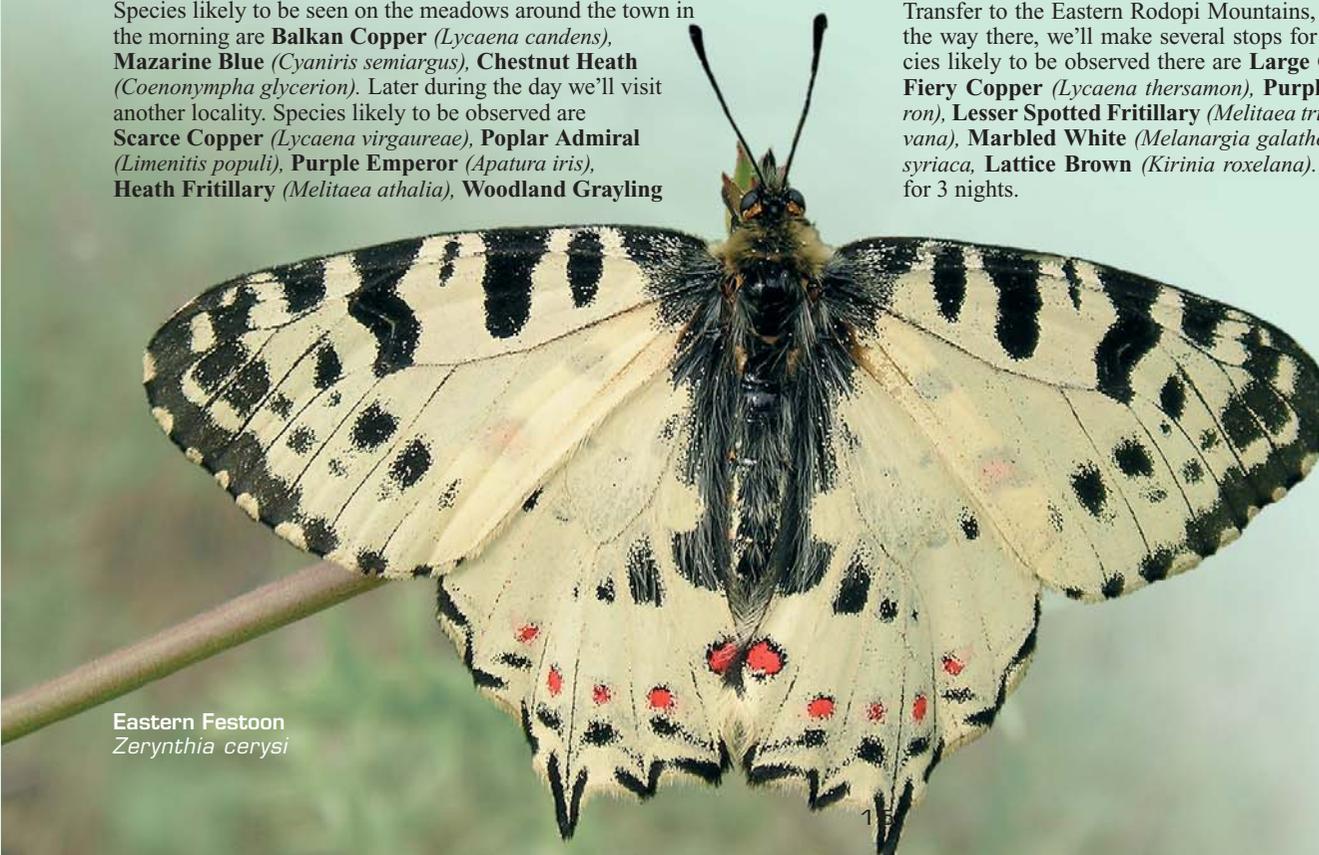
Observations will be held at several places near Koprivshitsa town. Species likely to be seen on the meadows around the town in the morning are **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Mazarine Blue** (*Cyaniris semiargus*), **Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion*). Later during the day we'll visit another locality. Species likely to be observed are **Scarce Copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Poplar Admiral** (*Limenitis populi*), **Purple Emperor** (*Apatura iris*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Woodland Grayling**



(*Hipparchia fagi*), **White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta*), **Freyer's Purple Emperor** (*Apatura metis*), **Hungarian Glider** (*Neptis rivularis*), **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), **Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea didyma*), **Twin Spot Fritillary** (*Brenthis hecate*), **Arran Brown** (*Erebia ligea*), **Almond Ringlet** (*Erebia alberganus*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*).

DAY THREE

Transfer to the Eastern Rodopi Mountains, town of Krumovgrad. While on the way there, we'll make several stops for making some observations. Species likely to be observed there are **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*), **Lesser Fiery Copper** (*Lycaena thersamon*), **Purple-Shot Copper** (*Lycaena alciphron*), **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea trivia*), **Map Butterfly** (*Arashnia levana*), **Marbled White** (*Melanargia galathea*), *Plebeius sephirus*, *Hipparchia syriaca*, **Lattice Brown** (*Kirinia roxelana*). Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.



Eastern Festoon
Zerynthia cerysi

DAY FOUR

Observations in the vicinity of Arda River Valley. The most interesting species likely to be seen there are **Sandy Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus cinarae*), **Southern Small White** (*Pieris mannii*), **Krueper's Small White** (*Pieris krueperi*), **Eastern Wood White** (*Leptidea duponcheli*), **Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow** (*Colias erate*), **Lesser Bath White** (*Pontia chloridice*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balcanicus*), **Eastern Baton Blue** (*Pseudophilotes vicrama schiffneruelleri*), **Aricia anteros**, **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus armoricanus*), **Yellow Banded Skipper** (*Pirgus sidae*).

DAY FIVE

Observations in the vicinity of Madzharovo Town. In the morning we will visit a rocky area near Arda River. The most interesting species we can possibly observe there are: **Grecian Copper** (*Lycaena ottomana*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*), **Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*), *Aricia anteros*, *Plebeius sephirus*, **Amanda's Blue** (*Polyommatus amandus*).

DAY SIX

Transfer to Central Rodopi Mountains. While on the way there, we will make observations at several places on both sides of the road. The most interesting species we possibly can observe are *Cartherocephalus palaemon*, **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Woodland Ringlet** (*Erebia medusa*), **Large Ringlet**

(*Erebia Euryale*), **Bright Eyed Ringlet** (*Erebia oeme*). Accomodation at a local hotel at Gela village for 1 night.

DAY SEVEN

Making observations in the vicinity of Trigrad Village. The most interesting species we can possibly observe there are **Amanda's Blue**

(*Polyommatus amandus*), **False Eros Blue**

(*Polyommatus eroides*), **Scotch Argus**

(*Erebia aethiops*), **Eastern Large**

Heath (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*),

Clouded Appolo (*Parnassius*

apollo), **Mountain Small White**

(*Pieris ergane*), **Escher's Blue**

(*Polyommatus escheri*),

Polyommatus admetus,

Ripart's Anomalous Blue

(*Polyommatus ripartii*), **Marsh Fritillary**

(*Euphydryas aurinia*), **White Admiral** (*Limnitis camilla*), **Black Ringlet**

(*Erebia melas*). Late in the afternoon transfer to Dabrash hotel and accommodation for 1 night.



Vanessa antiopa

DAY EIGHT

After breakfast, transfer to Sofia airport follows, where our tour comes to its end.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price: 810 EUR

Single supp: 150 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 910 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Paeonia peregrina

SEA BOTANICAL TOUR – BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

27th April – 4th May 2019

Best Time: **Mid April – May**

Ask for more tour dates.

DAY ONE

Our tour begins with landing at the airport of Bourgas city and the immediate transfer to the little seaside town of Kiten. Kiten is in immediate vicinity to Nature Reserve “Ropotamo”, which encompasses forests, sand dunes, part of the sea shore, lakes and marshes on Ropotamo riversides, the river itself in its lower reaches and its mouth where it flows into the Black Sea. This area is exceptionally rich in rare European plant and animal species. We put up at a local hotel for three nights.

DAY TWO

Today, we will visit the Nature Park “Strandzha Mountain”. Typical for this region are the oak forests, those of **Oriental Beech** and the mixed deciduous forests. All those forests have a rich undergrowth of extremely rare and interesting species like **Slender False-Brome** (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), **Sword-leaved Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera longifolium*), **Eastern Sowbread** (*Cyclamen coum*), *Daphne pontica*, **Cherry Laurel** (*Laurocerasus officinalis*),

Common Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*),

Primrose (*Primula acaulis* spp. *rosea*),

Strandzha's Oak (*Quercus hartwissiana*),

Oriental Durmast (*Quercus polycarpa*),

Pontic Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*),

Thracian Woundwort (*Stachys thracica*),

Oriental Trachystemon, **Borage** (*Trachystemon orientalis*).

In the afternoon, we are going to visit the sand dunes in the reserve Ropotamo, where we expect to see

Cionura (*Cionura erecta*), **Dog Strangling Vine**

(*Cynanchum acuta*), *Galilea mucronata*, **Yellow Hornpoppy**

(*Glaucium flavum*), **European Venus' looking Glass**

(*Legousia speculum-veneris*), **Summer Snowflake**

(*Leucojum aestivum*), **Violet Limodore**

(*Limodorum abortivum*), **Flax** (*Linum capitatum*), *Maresia nana*,

Silene euxina, **Thracian Tulip** (*Tulipa thracica*

(syn. *hageri*).

DAY THREE

Today, we will have a bit more walking on a rough terrain.

The passage will be some 8 km long along the Black Sea rocky coast. The views are really beautiful: the blue sea with small bays on the left and the oak forests on the right. We expect to see species like **Peacock**

Anemone (*Anemone pavonina*), **Rockrose**

(*Cistus incanus*), **Sage-Leaved Cistus** (*Cistus*

salvifolius), **Sea Kale** (*Crambe maritime*), **Sea Holly** (*Eryngium maritimum*),

Wild Jasmine (*Jasminum fruticans*), **Limonium** (*Limonium gmelinii*),

Butterfly Orchid (*Orchis papilionaceae*), **Serapias** (*Serapias vomeraceae*),

Verbascum bugulifolium, *Verbascum phoeniceum*.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will have ahead of us the transfer to the northern Black-sea coastal town of Kavarna. During the trip we will stop for a sight-seeing tour in the seaside town-museum of Nessebar. Originally, it was a Thracian settlement, later when ancient Greeks settled in the Balkans they took it on concession from Thracians and developed it further as a rich Black-sea town and port. Then Thracians, already called Bulgarians, took it back after the first Bulgarian state was founded. After the sightseeing is over, we'll continue with our trip to the north crossing the Balkan range. We will have lunch in a small restaurant in the village of Goritsa. Late in the afternoon we'll arrive at the small town of Kavarna located almost on the very sea shore. Accommodation in a local hotel for three nights.

DAY FIVE

Today, we will again make a walk along the seaside but instead of forests around us, we will see low shrubs and steppe. We will visit the Archaeological Reserve of “Yaylata”. The traverse is about 4 km long almost along the very edge of the rocky coast. The area is rich of rare steppe, eastern species like **Yellow Yarrow** (*Achillea clypeolata*), **Milk-Vetch** (*Astragalus gladiatus*), **Broom** (*Chamaecytisus jankae*), **Myrtle Spurge** (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), **Limonium** (*Limonium gmelinii*), **Golden-flowered Onosma** (*Onosma taurica*), **Fern Leaf Peony** (*Paeonia tenuifolia*), *Paeonia peregrina*, **Southern Scandix** (*Scandix australis*), **False Vetch** (*Astragalus monspessulanus*), **Bladder Senna** (*Colutea arborescens*), **Blue Hound's Tongue** (*Cynoglossum creticum*), *Peucedanum arenarium*, *Silene caliacrae*.



DAY SIX

This day our walk will include a traverse of about 3-km length, from the beach of Kavarna to the village of Bozhourets in the south. We will concentrate again on steppe species of plants. We'll hope to see species like **Pontic Wormwood** (*Artemisia pontica*), **Lesser Honeywort** (*Cerinthe minor*), **Silver Berry** (*Eleagnus angustifolia*), *Hyacinthella leucophaea*, *Matthiola odoratissima*, **Fern-leaf Peony** (*Paeonia tenuifolia*), *Stachys atherocalyx*. After lunch, there will be another passage (about 5-km long). We expect to see *Adonis volgensis*, *Centaurea napulifera*, *Chamaecytisus jankae*, **Star of Bethlehem** (*Ornithogalum comosum*), **Balsamic Sage** (*Salvia tomentosa*), **Clary Sage** (*Salvia sclarea*).

DAY SEVEN

Today, we are going to visit the steppe areas of the Nature Reserve "Kaliakra". The passage will be about 4-km long. At the very cape, there was a settlement in ancient times, like the one we saw at the reserve "Yaylata". In antiquity, it was the capital of the ancient local lord Dobrotitsa. We will expect to see species like *Bellevalia sarmatica*, *Chamaecytisus jankae*, *Goniolimon besserianum*, *Haplophyllum suaveolens*, *Iris pumila*, *Jurinea ledebourii*, *Jurinea stoechadifolia*, **Eastern Skullcap** (*Scutellaria orientalis ssp. pinnatifida*), *Silene caliacrae*, **Feather Grass** (*Stipa capillata*), *Tanacetum millefolium*.

DAY EIGHT

After breakfast, we may make the last observations in the area depending on the spare time at our disposal, before the transfer to the city of Bourgas, where our tour started and now comes to an end.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price:	810 EUR
Single supp:	150 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	900 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

MOUNTAIN BOTANIST TOUR – BULGARIA

9 DAYS TOUR

29th June – 7th July 2019

Best Time: Mid June – Mid July

Ask for more tour dates.

DAY ONE

We will start our floristic excursion from the nature reserve of Bistrishko Branishte, situated in Vitosha Mountain Nature Park. This reserve comprises a very old spruce forest as well as areas above the tree line, in the sub-alpine zone of the mountain at an altitude of about 2000 m asl. The walk is a very easy and pleasant one. There are many rare and endemic plants like *Lilium jankae*, **Narcissus-flowered Anemone** (*Anemone narcissiflora*), **Lesser Twayblade** (*Listera cordata*), **Globe Flower** (*Trollius europaeus*), *Gentianella bulgarica*, *Senecio pancicii*, **Lesser Bladderwort** (*Utricularia minor*), **Great Yellow Gentian** (*Gentiana lutea*), **Common Sundew** (*Drosera rotundifolia*). Accommodation for 2 nights in a local hotel. The hotel is located at the foot of the Nature Park "Vitosha" and is surrounded by flowered meadows and forests.

DAY TWO

Today, we are about to visit the Nature Reserve "Golo Bardo". The reserve consists of low-altitude limestone hills covered mainly by grassy vegetation. This countryside is rather dry but the limestone provides unique conditions for the growth and development of a number of rare and endemic plant species like **Marsh Helleborine** (*Epipactis palustris*), *Himantoglossum caprinum*, **Pyramidal Orchid** (*Anacamptys pyramidalis*), *Satureja coerulea*, *Campanula bononiensis*, *Rhodax canus*, *Dorycnium herbaceum*, *Delphinium orientale*, *As-tragalus onobrychis*, *Scrophularia canina*, *Anthyllis aurea*, *Centaurea chrysolepis*, *Centaurea orientalis*, *Centaurea immanuelis-loewii*, *Euphorbia barrelieri*, *Anthericum ramosum*, *Allium saxatile*, *Asphodeline taurica*, *Onosma visianii*, *Achillea ageratifolia*, *Achillea clypeolata*, *Potentilla cinerea*, *Paronychia kapela*, *Edrajanthus serbicus*.

DAY THREE

After breakfast and a brief visual inspection of the meadows we set off for the National Park "Rila Mountain". During the transfer, we will visit the famous Rila Monastery. This monastery is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. We will make a short walk to an altitude of 2000 m asl where, hopefully, we will see *Chamaecytisus absinthioides*, *Campanula trichocalicina*, **Green Foxglove** (*Digitalis viridiflora*), **Heart-flowered Marsh-orchid** (*Dactylorhiza codigera*), **Heldreich's Maple** (*Acer heldreichii*), *Asyneuma pichleri* and many other species. Late in the afternoon, we arrive at Bansko town, located at the foot of Pirin Mountain National Park. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.



Pontic Rhododendron
Rhododendron ponticum



Asphodeline taurica

DAY FOUR

Today, we will begin our botanical observations by riding with the minivan to an altitude of about 1500m asl. The walk is easy and pleasant up to about 1800m asl and follows the track to the mountain chalet the name of “Vihren”. We will see there the oldest tree in Bulgaria, the 1400-years old Balkan endemic species **Bosnian (White-bark) Pine** (*Pinus heldreichii*) along with other endemic species like *Verbascum davidovii*, *Dianthus petraeus ssp. petraeus*, *Iris reihenbachii*, *Saxifraga exarata*, **Starry Saxifrage** (*Saxifraga stellaris*), *Linum capitatum*, *Pedicularis orthantha*, *Daphne oleoides*, **White Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera damasonium*), **Red Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera rubra*), *Veronica kellereri*, *Aquilegia aurea*, *Rhinanthus javorkae*, *Hamaecytisus absinthoides*.

DAY FIVE

Today, we will climb with the minivan to an altitude of about 1800m asl. We'll fetch with us the packed lunch and set off for the high-mountain lake named “Okoto” which is at an altitude of 2050m asl. There we'll see *Primula minima*, *Dianthus microlepis*, *Isoetes lacustris*, *Jovibarba heuffelii*, *Silene larchfeldiana*, *Bartsia alpina*, *Gentiana punctata*, *Aquilegia aurea*, *Iris reihenbahii* and many other plant species. Late in the afternoon we descend with the vehicle to lower altitudes where we expect to see *Neotia nidus-avis*, **Broad-leaved Helleborine** (*Epipactis helleborine*), *Centaurea managetae*, *Chondrilla urumoffii* and some other species.

DAY SIX

Today, we will move to the Rodopi Mountains in the bosom of which the next hotel where we will be accommodated has snuggled itself. During the transfer, we'll follow the river Mesta (Nestos). We hope to find *Campanula lanata*, *Jovibarba heuffelii*, *Genista rumelica*, *Campanula scutellata*, *Stachys angustifolia*, *Dianthus pinifolius*, *Dianthus deltooides*, *Dianthus superbus*, *Sempervivum leucanthum*, *Verbascum orientale*, *Gladiolus imbricatus*, *Thalichthrum lucidum*, *Moenchia mantica*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Dactylorhiza calopisii*, *Orchis ustulata*, **Violet Limodore** (*Limodorum abortivum*), *Rosa caesia*, *Euphorbia seguierana*, *Centaurea stenolepis*, *Allium scorodoprasum*, *Ornithogalum sphaerocarpum*. We will put up at the hotel “Dabrash” for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, we will visit the magnificent Trigrad gorge. One can hardly imagine the gorge beauty if one does not see it with one's own eyes. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. Species to see: *Haberlea rhodopensis*, *Petkovia orphanidea*, *Sideritis scardica*, *Minuartia rhodopaea*, *Malcolmia serbica*, *Morina persica*, *Trachelium rumelianum*, *Arenaria rhodopaea*, *Marrubium frivaldskyanum* and many other species. Late in the afternoon, we return to our hotel for dinner and spending the night.

DAY EIGHT

Today, what lies ahead is to leave the beautiful Rodopi Mountains and make out our way northwards, crossing Thracian lowlands and continuing to Sredna Gora Range. During the transfer, we will visit a nature reserve called “Beglika”, where we have good chances to see *Viola rhodopaea*, *Astragalus centralpinus*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Scabiosa rhodopaea*. While crossing the lowlands we will see many meadows dappled with beautiful flowers, **fields planted with Oil-bearing Rose**, *Campanula lanata*, *Dianthus deltooides* and many other plants. Our last night will be spent in Koprivshtitsa, a little mountain town from the time of Bulgarian National Revival.

DAY NINE

After breakfast, a transfer to Sofia follows, where the tour will end. Depending on the spare time at our disposal we can carry out last observations on mountain meadows.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price:	900 EUR
Single supp:	180 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1000 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Viola perinensis

DRAGONFLIES OF BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

27th June – 4th July 2019

Best Time: June

Ask for more tour dates.



The exceptional diversity of Dragonflies in Bulgaria is determined by the geographic location of the country and its specific climatic conditions. Species of Dragonflies occurring in the country are 70. Mountain ranges in South Bulgaria give shelter to relic species, which have survived the last Ice Age. The peats are attractive habitat for *Somatochlora arctica*, *Leucorrhinia dubia* and *Somatochlora metallica*. Some of the high mountain streams are overflowing with species of the genus *Cordulegaster*, while the lower reaches of the rivers are the kingdom of *Calopteryx*, *Onychogomphus forcipatus* and *Ophiogomphus cecilia*. There, however, *Corduliochlora borisi* is the indisputable favourite in the preferences of Bulgarian and foreign nature lovers because the species has been described for the science from South Bulgaria. The Black Sea coast combines river habitats with wetlands in which one can observe clustering of scores and hundreds of *Lestes macrostigma* or the fast flying around *Somatochlora meridionalis* and *Caliaeschna microstigma*.

DAY ONE

Our tour starts in the morning in Sofia with a transfer to the Eastern Rodopi Mountains. This part of the Rodopi Mountains is not high. In contrast to the western and central part of the mountains its relief is predominantly low-mountainous and hilly. The average altitude above the sea level is only 320 m and at many places the country is rocky and covered with basalt. This is an area checkered with craters of ancient volcanoes. During the transfer we will stop several times by the river Maritsa and by small dams in order to observe species like *Ophiogomphus cecilia*, *Orthetrum albistylum*, *Gomphus flavipes*, *Coenagrion ornatum*, *Libellula fulva*, *Crocothemis erythraea*. Accommodation for three nights at a local hotel in the town of Kroumovgrad.

DAYS TWO AND THREE.

We are going to visit a multitude of small lakes and rivulets surrounded by meadows and broad-leaved groves. At many places the ground is rocky covered with basalt from ancient volcanic eruptions. We expect to see *Epallage fatime*, *Calopteryx virgo*, *Aeshna isoceles*, *Coenagrion scitulum*, *Lestes virens*, *Chalcolestes parvidens*, *Corduliochlora borisi*, *Caliaeschna microstigma*,

Bulgarian Emerald
Corduliochlora borisi



Onychogomphus forcipatus, *Chalcolestes viridis*,
Cordulegaster picta, *Lestes barbarus*,
Erythromma lindenii, *Enallagma cyathigerum*.
Packed lunch for the two days there.

DAY FOUR

Today, what lies ahead of us is a trip towards the central part of the Rodopi Mountains. During the transfer we will notice how, along with the raising altitude, the landscape also changes. Rocks and grassy vegetation yield its place

to bushes, then follow low broad-leaved grooves, then come well developed broad-leaved grooves, then they turn into well developed forests and the latter, on their part, turn into mixed forests and finally, at an altitude of about 1200 m asl there appear the coniferous forests. During the transfer, we will stop several times to observe *Somatochlora meridionalis*, *Aeshna affinis*, *Orthetrum coerulescensanceps*, *Orthetrum brunneum*, *Cordulegaster picta*, *Aeshna juncea*, *Libellula quadrimaculata*, *Cordulia aenaea*, *Coenagrion hastulatum*, *Lestes sponsa*. Accommodation for a night in a local little hotel in the high-mountain village of Gela. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY FIVE

Today, during our transfer, we are going to visit the Trigrad Gorge. What astounds every visitor of this part of Bulgaria are the huge rocks raising straight upwards reaching a height of and above 200 m. Visitors will also be impressed by the deep rocky gorges. Strange looking trees of the local subspecies of the Black Pine (*Pinus nigra*) grow right out of the rock cracks, without even a trace of soil... The river that has pierced through the magnificent Rodopi Mountains runs along the gorge forming meanders and waterfalls along its way. Here is the cave in which the mythical Orpheus has entered in the search of his beloved Eurydice. This is the best place in Europe where one can watch the exceptionally beautiful bird Wallcreeper reminding a huge red butterfly in flight. Lunch at the little restaurant in the local mountain hut. Here we can taste the tastiest trout within the borders of Bulgaria. After lunch we leave the gorge and in 45 km

ride arrive at a local hotel where we accommodate for the night. During the transfer we will hopefully see *Cordulegaster heros*, *Lestes dryas*, *Sympetrum flaveolum*, *Aeshna cyanea*.

DAY SIX

A new and not so long transfer lies ahead of us. We are leaving Rodopa Mountains and set off for the Pirin Mountain National Park. During the transfer with the minivan we will climb up to about 1450 m asl and visit few somewhat marshy mountain meadows, where we hope to see *Cordulegaster bidentata*, *Sympetrum pedemontanum*. Later on and at a lower altitude we will try to find out species like *Caliaeschna microstigma*, *Somatochlora meridionalis*, *Cordulegaster heros*. Late in the afternoon we arrive at the little twon-museum Melnik. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

The entire day shall be spent not far from the hotel, making observations around the local small lakes and marshes. We will also visit the volcanic area of Kozhoukh Planina Mount. This is a basalt hill at the foot of which hot mineral water gushes out. Hopefully, we will see there *Sympetrum depressiusculum*, *Selysiothemisnigra*, *Aeshna isocoetes*, *Anax parthenope*, *Onychogomphus forcipatus*, *Libellula fulva*, *Sympetrum fonscolombii*, *Erythromma viridulum* and perhaps a few more species. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY EIGHT

After lunch a transfer to Sofia follows where our tour will come to its end. Depending on the flights' schedule if we will have some time available at our disposal we will visit the world renowned Rila Monastery – a monument of the World Culture Heritage under the aegis of UNESCO.

Group size: 5–15 + leader

Land only price:	880 EUR
Single supp:	180 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	990 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Blue-eyed Goldenring
Cordulegaster insignis

© Y. Kutsarov



DRAGONFLIES OF RHODES ISLAND (GREECE)

8 DAYS TOUR
6th–13th July 2019

Best Time: July
Ask for more tour dates.

Rhodes is one of the richest Greek islands in terms of biodiversity, but not only. Rhodes is a combination of spectacular scenery, unique traditions, rich culture and ancient history. It is situated in the eastern part of the Aegean Sea, just 18 km west of Turkey. Geographical location and climate have turned the flora and fauna of the island into a unique blend of Mediterranean and Asian elements. Dragonflies are some of the species that were significantly influenced by geographic and climatic conditions, the island can see a combination of rare species of SE Europe and Asian species. In Rhodes can be seen some of the most rare and unique for Europe dragonflies as: **Magnificent Emperor** (*Anax immaculifrons*), **Indigo Dropwing** (*Trithemis festiva*), **Black Percher** (*Diplacodes lefebvreii*), **Slender Skimmer** (*Orthetrum sabina*), **Small Skimmer** (*Orthetrum taeniolatum*), **Violet Dropwing** (*Trithemis annulata*), **Black Pennant** (*Selysiothemis nigra*), **Odalisque** (*Epallage fatime*). During our tour

we will see between 30 and 35 species of dragonflies. Until now, in the island have been identified 37 species that could hardly be seen for a week-long tour, these are some of the rarest species of dragonflies in Europe. Also, as a proof of the high biodiversity of island of Rhodes are the identified 55 species of butterflies. Among other things there are 24 species of reptiles that have been found in Rhodes for certain, and 257 of bird species: many passage migrants but 80 species breed there.

DAY ONE

Arrival – Landing at Diagoras Airport. Depending on the time of our arrival we will have our first opportunity for observing the mouths of the nearby rivers around the airport. Expected species to watch: **Migrant Spreadwing** (*Lestes barbarus*), **Blue Featherleg** (*Platycnemis pennipes*), **Vagrant Emperor** (*Anax ephippiger*), **Keel Skimmer** (*Orthetrum coerulescens*), **Southern Skimmer** (*Orthetrum brunneum*), **Small Skimmer** (*Orthetrum taeniolatum*), **Red-veined Darter** (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*), **Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*), **Southern Darter** (*Sympetrum meridionale*), **Scarlet Darter** (*Crocothemis erythraea*), **Violet Dropwing** (*Trithemis annulata*). Follows a short transfer to mountainous area (its altitude is 800 m asl) where we will be accommodated until the end of our stay here. Located in a beautiful pine forest, the facility we will use also has its long-time history. Built in 1929, during the Italian possession of the island, the hotel was used as a holiday home by Italian officers and later, and during the WWII it was turned into a German military hospital. The hotel has another advantage, too: a relatively cooler climate compared to the seaside. The not very large area of the island as well as the use of a single facility where we will be accommodated will allow us to spend more time in the field and at the same time will save us long journeys and frequent change of hotels. (Accommodation for 7 nights).



DAY TWO

The day will start with a visit to the countryside area Epta Piges and we will visit the estuaries of the rivers in the northeastern part of the island. Key species for the day: **Southern Banded Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx splendens*), **Eastern Willow Spreadwing** (*Chalcolestes parvidens*), **Small Bluetail** (*Ischnura pumilio*), **Common Bluetail** (*Ischnura elegans*), **Southern Small Pincertail** (*Onychogomphus forcipatus*), **Blue Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*), **Epaulet Skimmer** (*Orthetrum chrysostigma*), **Black Pennant** (*Selysiothemis nigra*). Lunch at a local tavern. Early in the afternoon we will gradually come to the largest city on the island – the town of Rhodes, located in the northeast close to the Turkish coast. The city is known since ancient times with one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Colossus of Rhodes. We will also visit the Castle of the city of Rhodes, which is a UNESCO's World Heritage Site and one of the best preserved medieval towns in Europe. Transfer to our hotel and spending the night there.

DAY THREE

Today we will head for the east, where after a short trip we will reach our next observation points: Skaloniti reservoir and the estuaries Kontaris torrent estuary, Asklipios torrent estuary, Gennadinos estuary, Plimmyri marsh, Kattavia marsh. We will also visit the most southern point of the island, the peninsula Prasonisi, which is a protected area under NATURA 2000, where we can observe a nesting and extremely rare for Europe **Eleonora's Falcon** (*Falco eleonorae*). We will have our lunch in a local tavern on the peninsula. Expected species to watch for the day: **Southern Darter** (*Sympetrum meridionale*), **Scarlet Darter** (*Crocothemis erythraea*), **Black Pennant** (*Selysiothemis nigra*), **Wandering Glider** (*Pantala flavescens*). Transfer to our hotel and overnight there.

DAY FOUR

Today we will visit the southern part of the largest dam on the island, and the rivers that feed it. Located in the central part of the island, the reservoir is surrounded by low vegetation and many olive trees, forming a typical and very beautiful Mediterranean scenery. Shallows, where the rivers flow into the reservoir have acquired the appearance of natural wetlands with natural belt of water vegetation, with a lot of waterfowl and becoming a habitat to thousands of dragonflies. Among this extremely beautiful view we will have our picnic lunch, then we will continue our observations in the area. Key species for the day: **Odalisque** (*Epallage fatime*), **Eastern Willow Spreadwing** (*Chalcolestes parvidens*), **Blue Featherleg** (*Platycnemis pennipes*), **Blue Emperor** (*Anax imperator*), **Lesser Emperor** (*Anax parthenope*), **Eastern Spectre** (*Caliaeschna microstigma*), **Southern Small Pincertail** (*Onychogomphus forcipatus forcipatus*), **Blue Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*), **Black-tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum cancellatum*), **Long Skimmer** (*Orthetrum trinacria*), **Black Percher** (*Diplacodes lefebvreii*). In the late afternoon we will visit one of the historical landmarks of the Rhodes medieval settlement Lindos, defined as one of the most-beautiful places on the island.

In the village there are many traditional historical houses and buildings dating from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries AD. And legend has it that the village was founded by one of the divine sons of Zeus. Here was also born the creator of Colossus of Rhodes. Above the village is located one of the most ancient acropolises (more ancient than the one in Athens). Dinner in one of the traditional village tavernas on the roof of a house. Transfer to the hotel and spending the night there.

DAY FIVE

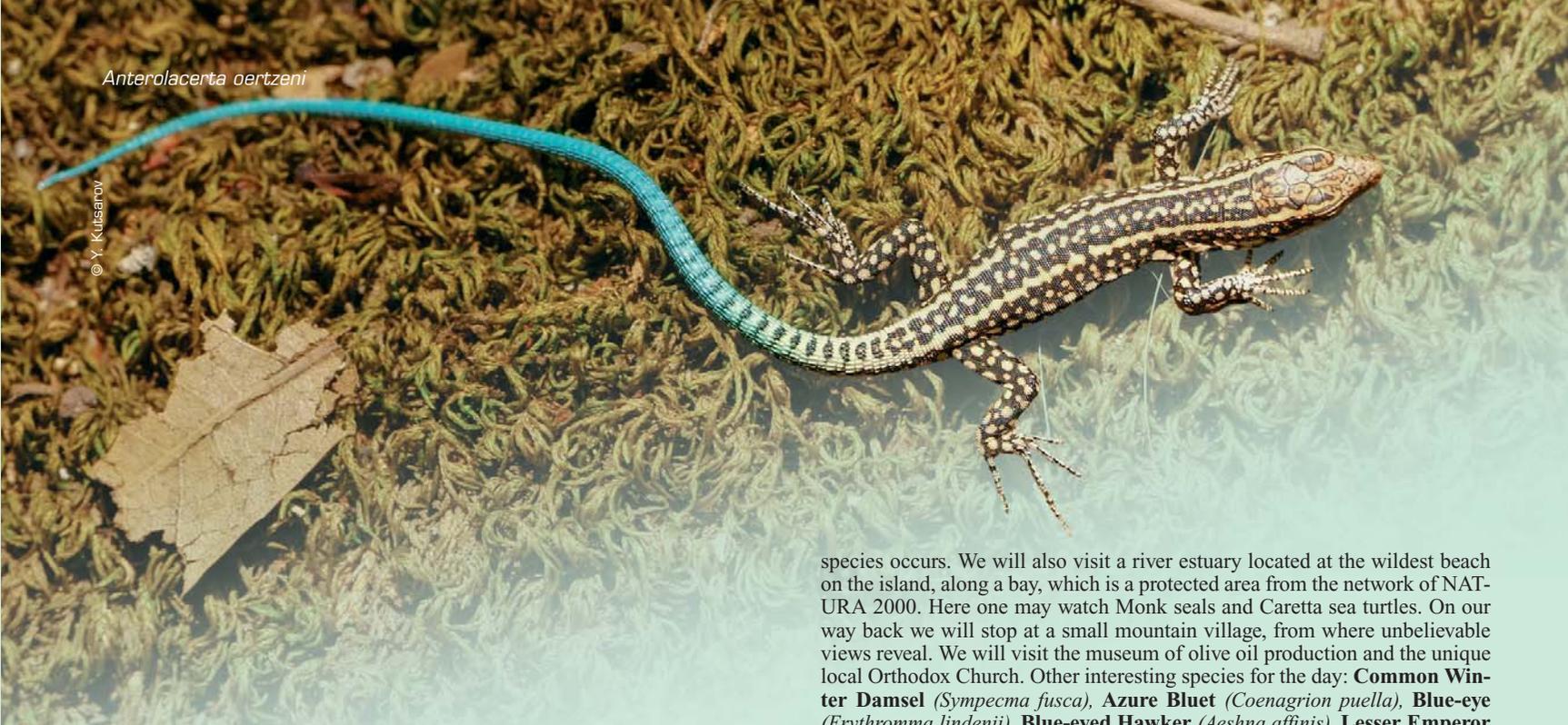
This day we will allocate to visit of the northern side of the largest dam on the island, and the adjoining rivers. Also we will visit two small wetlands adjacent to the hotel. We will be able to observe rare and interesting species such as: **Southern Banded Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx splendens*), **Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*), **Odalisque** (*Epallage fatime*), **Small Bluetail** (*Ischnura pumilio*), **Blue Emperor** (*Anax imperator*), **Eastern Spectre** (*Caliaeschna microstigma*), **Red-veined Darter** (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*), **Violet Dropwing** (*Trithemis annulata*), **Indigo Dropwing** (*Trithemis festiva*), **Black Pennant** (*Selysiothemis nigra*). Picnic lunch for the day. Transfer to the hotel and overnight there.



Crocothemis erythraea

© Y. Kutsarov

Anterolacerta oertzeni



© Y. Kutsarov

DAY SIX

After breakfast we will visit one of the most enchanting places in Rhodes: the nature reserve “Butterfly Valley”. A little train will take us to the top of the park, where the Kalopetra Monastery, built in 1784, is located. In front of us will open the most beautiful view of the valley for which we will then set off. The name of the reserve comes from the thousands of moths of the species **Jersey Tiger** (*Panaxia quadripunctaria*), which inhabit the park, attracted by the scent of Oriental Sweetgum trees (*Liquidambar orientalis*). This is actually the only remaining European natural forest of Oriental Sweetgum trees (*Liquidambar orientalis*). Our attention will also be drawn by the opportunity to observe the largest dragonfly in Europe, the **Magnificent Emperor** (*Anax immaculifrons rambur*). Lunch at a local tavern. If there is time we will be able to visit also the river estuaries in the northwestern part of the island, where we will be able to see interesting and rare dragonfly species like the **Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*), **Migrant Spreadwing** (*Lestes barbarus*), **Vagrant Emperor** (*Anax ephippiger*), **Keeled Skimmer** (*Orthetrum coerulescens*), **Southern Skimmer** (*Orthetrum brunneum*). Transfer to the hotel and overnight there.

DAY SEVEN

Short transfer to the southern part of the island, where we will visit river Si-anitis and Apolakkia dam. From the dam opens a stunning view, where later we will have our picnic lunch. At the inflow end of the reservoir we can see the roof of a submerged church that locals still maintain. We will continue to go around the area where we will concentrate on looking for the **Slender Skimmer** (*Orthetrum sabina*). Rhodes is the only place in Europe where this

species occurs. We will also visit a river estuary located at the wildest beach on the island, along a bay, which is a protected area from the network of NAT-URA 2000. Here one may watch Monk seals and Caretta sea turtles. On our way back we will stop at a small mountain village, from where unbelievable views reveal. We will visit the museum of olive oil production and the unique local Orthodox Church. Other interesting species for the day: **Common Winter Damsel** (*Sympecma fusca*), **Azure Bluet** (*Coenagrion puella*), **Blue-eye** (*Erythromma lindenii*), **Blue-eyed Hawker** (*Aeshna affinis*), **Lesser Emperor** (*Anax parthenope*), **Eastern Spectre** (*Caliaeschna microstigma*), **Black-tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum cancellatum*), **Epaulet Skimmer** (*Orthetrum chrysostigma*), **Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*), **Wandering Glider** (*Pantala flavescens*). Unfortunately, this is the last day of our tour on island of Rhodes, a place with ancient history, spectacular views and interesting nature. Transfer to our hotel and spending the last night there.

DAY EIGHT

Depending on the time of our return flight, we will make a last walk around the road to the airport.

Group size:	5–15 + leader
Land only price:	1475 EUR
Single supp:	150 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1630 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:
ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:
airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

PELICANS & LARGE BIRDS OF PREY PHOTOGRAPHY – BULGARIA & GREECE

8 DAYS TOUR
14th–21st January 2019
10th–17th February 2019

Best Time: January – February
Ask for more tour dates.

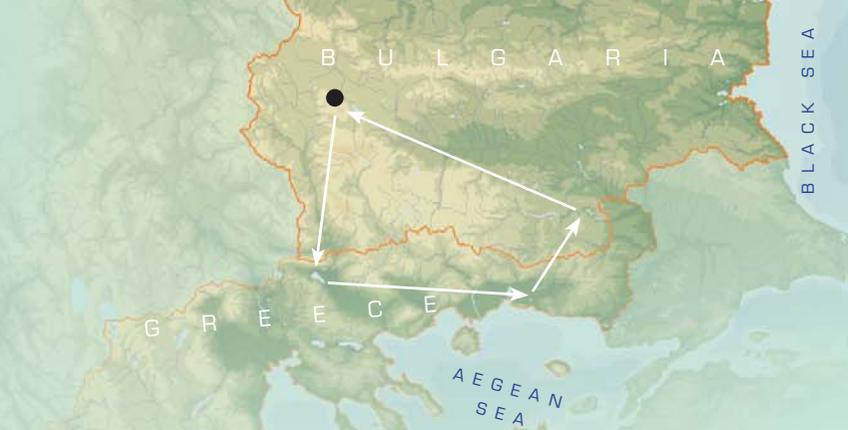
During this tour we will visit some of the most prominent bird wintering sites in Eastern Europe. Kerkini Lake in Northern Greece is well known as such a site with brilliant birdlife. We will have a closer look at one of the local wintering specialties, the globally threatened Dalmatian Pelican. Exploring the lake by boats will allow us to approach this enigmatic bird just to a few feet and thus have a perfect photography opportunities. Together with the Dalmatian Pelicans at Kerkini we will have a lot of wildfowl species as well as some raptors as **Greater Spotted Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier** and more.

For the second part of our tour we will visit the Eastern Rhodope Mountain in Bulgaria. Eastern Rhodopes are area of exceptional biodiversity and well known as one of the best places in Europe for large birds of prey. For a few days we will use specially erected wooden hides next to a feeding station, which attracts good number of large birds of prey. We will have the great chance to observe and photograph the spectacular **Golden Eagle** as well as **Griffon** and if lucky **Black vulture**.

Sometimes the feeding station is visited by Foxes, Jackals & Wolves, giving us the chance for some unique shots.



Dalmatian Pelicans



DAY ONE – Transfer from Sofia to Kerkini Lake (Northern Greece)

Landing at Sofia International Airport (Bulgaria) with transfer journey of about 3 hours to Lake Kerkini in Northern Greece.

During the transfer we will visit the famous Rila Monastery in Bulgaria. The monastery was built in the 10th century AD and is listed in UNESCO's List of World Monuments of Culture. The monastery has been designated as one of the most significant heritage and cultural sites, not only in Bulgaria, but of the entirety of Southern Europe itself.

We will stay at a very comfortable guest house located in a small village near Kerkini Lake, for the next three nights.

DAY TWO & DAY THREE – Birding & Photography at Kerkini Lake

Kerkini Lake is located in Northern Greece, not far from the Bulgarian border. The lake and its surroundings are considered as one of the most interesting birdwatching sites in Greece. The lake itself has a rich bird fauna all year round and has protected status granted under the Ramsar Convention. The Park has documented over 300 differing bird species sighted as present.

During the next two days we will have the perfect opportunity to combine birding with photography. Kerkini is considered one of the best places in the Balkans for Pelican photography – and many others. During the tour we will have the opportunity to get very close to the birds. Photography takes place from a boat spending around 2 hours in the morning and 2 in the afternoon to cater for different light conditions/levels.

Between the sessions we will continue with the boat trip and shore observations around the lake. This will give us good chance to observe & photograph other species.

During the winter, Kerkini is a bird rich area. Ducks of more than 10 species are in and around the lake in good numbers with **Mute, Whooper** and **Tundra Swan, Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous Duck, Greater Flamingo** and **White-fronted Goose** can be seen. If lucky, the rare **Lesser White-fronted Goose** and even rarer, **Red breasted Geese**, can also be found.

Many over-wintering raptors include **Greater Spotted Eagle**, many **Buzzards, Sparrowhawk**, fewer **Marsh** and **Hen Harriers**, fewer **Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Common Kestrel** and sometimes **Imperial Eagle**.

DAY FOUR – Nestos Delta, Porto Lagos Area & Lake Vistonida

After breakfast we transfer (3 hours) to the Nestos Delta. Mostly driving along the coast we will explore a wide range of habitats including: lagoons, marshes, salt pans and lakes which often offer a wide range of birds.

Our first stop for the day will be in the area of Keramoti village, visiting local lagoons, where we expect to see: **Red-necked Grebe, Common and Velvet Scoters, Black-throated Diver, Black-necked Grebe & Mediterranean Gull**.

We continue towards Porto Lagos and Lake Vistonida. **Dalmatian Pelican** is common, particularly in winter here, as well as **White-headed-Duck**. The woods near the Porto Lagos village can provide us with: **Syrian and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Warblers, Tree Pipit**, a lot of species of **Herons & Pygmy Cormorant**. Around Vistonida lake: **Black, Whiskered, Gull-billed Terns, Sandwich Tern, Little Ringed Plover, and Oystercatcher**.

Other possible species for the area are: **Smew, Gadwall, Short-eared Owl, Calandra Lark, Hen Harrier, Spotted Eagle, Grey & Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Avocet, Turnstone, Great Bittern** and others.

We will overnight at the small village of Fanari located near to the Thracian Lagoons.

DAY FIVE – Lake Ismarida and Eastern Rhodope Mountains

Today we will again cross the Bulgarian-Greece border on our way to the Eastern Rhodope Mountains. The Eastern Rhodopes is an area of rich biodiversity and is widely considered to be one of the best places in Europe to find large birds of prey. There; during the next couple of days – we will use special hides for observation and photography – of some spectacular large birds of prey which inhabit the area. Sometimes the feeding station in-front-of the hides is visited by Wolves & Red-foxes.

Before crossing the border into Greece we will make one final observation at Lake Ismarida, where we can expect to see many wildfowl. Although the lake is part of the Thracian Lagoons, it is treated quite separately because of its 'largely freshwater' character.

Possible species: **Mallard, Shelduck, Teal, Black-necked Grebe, Ferruginous Duck, Corn Bunting, Spotted and White-tailed Eagles** (are possible), **Bittern, Little Gull & Water Rail**.

In late afternoon we will reach the Eastern Rhodopes and the small village of Gorno Pole. For the next three nights we will be accommodated at a delightfully comfortable & charming guest house which serves only organic food.

DAY SIX & SEVEN – Large Birds of Prey at Madzarovo

For the next two days our main focus will be the large Birds of Prey in that area. For our observation and photography sessions we will use two specially erected wooden hides located in front of a feeding station. The second hide is more appropriate to photograph birds in flight. We will split into two groups, rotating day-by-day usage of the hides, ensuring equal and fair access for you all.

We will have good chance to observe and photograph: **Golden Eagle, Griffon Vulture, White-tailed Eagle** (and fingers-crossed), **Black Vulture**. And sometimes; **Foxes, Wolves & Jackals**.

To ensure a good chance of success the days will have early starts with just a 40 min. transfer from our accommodation to the hides. We will spend both days in the hides until sunset or/and until the light is good enough to meet your needs. Both hides are equipped with heating and portable WC.

Note: distance from the hides to where the birds typically land is between 20m – 40m. Accordingly 300–800mm lenses will be appropriate.

DAY EIGHT – Transfer to Sofia & Departure

A transfer of about 3.5 hrs follows for our departure flight from Sofia.

Group size: 5–8 + leader

Land only price: 1140 EUR

Single supp: 150 EUR

Deposit: 150 EUR

Individuals: 1700 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



Golden Eagle

GOLDEN JACKAL & EUROPEAN GROUND SQUIRREL PHOTOGRAPHY

7 DAYS TOUR

6th–12th April 2019

15th–21st June 2019

27th September – 3rd October 2019

Best Time: April – September

Ask for more tour dates.

© R. Tsvetkov

European Ground Squirrel



Of approximately 180 species of mammal found that populate Europe: in Bulgaria you will find over 100 of these, including numerous rare European examples. During this tour our main focus will be on the **Golden Jackal** and threatened: **European Ground Squirrel**. Both of these species survive in sustainable numbers within the borders of the country. Notably: Bulgaria maintains the largest Jackal population in Europe.

Among these target species we will also have the opportunity to observe, or photograph, other mammals common to the area such as; **Roe Deer, Brown Hare, Wild Boar, Pine Marten, Stone Marten** and **Badger** – and if we are lucky even the very rare **Marbled Polecat**.

During the tour we will be situated in a small but fruitful reserve surrounded by wild nature near to the village of Vetren (North-Eastern Bulgaria). Vetren is located just a couple of hundred meters away from the mighty Danube River, and just a few kilometers from the highly important reserve of Lake Srebarna. Srebarna itself now granted the protection of UNESCO as a unique ornithological world cultural and natural heritage site. This gives us another perfect opportunity, during the tour, to observe or take photos of some globally threatened species like the significant; **Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous Duck** and **Pygmy Cormorant** – and a number of other rare and of course, more common birds.

DAY ONE

Landing at Bucharest airport (Romania) or Varna airport (Bulgaria) will be followed by transfer journey of 150 km approx. to the village of Vetren. Depending on the arrival time afforded to us we will take our first opportunity for observation and photography of the **Golden Jackal**.

For observation of the **Golden Jackal**, we will use specially built permanent wooden hides. The hides are situated in front of known feeding sites also frequented by **Roe Deer** and **Wild Boar**.

Observations from the Golden Jackal hides will take place twice daily: at the break of dawn at sunrise and thereafter: late afternoon.

DAYS TWO & THREE

We will have an early morning start to the day and head out towards the Jackal hides. We will spend around 3 hours there before coming back to base for breakfast. A short transfer journey then follows breakfast: a few kilometers only to the internationally important Lake Srebarna. Here we will search for

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such rarities as the; **Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous Duck, Pygmy Cormorant** – and a number of other common and rarer birds such as: **Red-necked and Black-necked grebes, Purple, Squacco, Night herons, Marsh Harrier, Penduline Tit, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk** and also **Ruddy Shelduck**. The latter species breeds on the banks of the small dry inlets found around the lake. A late lunch follows and after a short break we will head out towards the Jackal hides for late afternoon observations.

DAYS FOUR & FIVE

Over the next two days our efforts will focus mainly on the **Golden Jackal** and threatened **European Ground Squirrel**. Following the early morning photography session afforded to us at the Jackal hide, we will have a quick breakfast before then – heading to the nearby colony of European Ground Squirrel. Here we will use portable hides, or if circumstances are favorable, take photographs up close from outside the hides: sometimes these animals allow us to be as close as 2 meters away. During early afternoon we will head back to base for a late lunch and short break: returning to the Jackal hides again during late afternoon.

DAY SIX

Our day will start with morning Jackal photography before then visiting a couple of the most important ornithological sites in the area. First we will stop at Maluk Preslavets Marsh – which is just 20 km away. Maluk Preslavets is an interesting place, not only for its rich bird diversity, but also for plant foliage as well. The protected Marsh Malak Preslavets has the largest density of White Water Lily (*Nymphaea alba*) found in Bulgaria. Depending on the time of year we can observe: **Squacco Heron, Small and Great Egret, Gray Heron** and **Mute Swan** – and even the **Whiskered Tern** can be seen here.

Throughout the year: **Great Cormorant, Western Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard, Montagu's Harrier, Common Blackbird, Eurasian Coot, Ferruginous Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Garganey** and **Eurasian Bittern** are common. We will take a packed lunch for the day before continuing to a second important ornithological site with the name of: "Stenata" (The Wall). Here we find the biggest colony of **European Bee-eater** – usually more than 100 pairs. We can also use the opportunity for a late afternoon visit to see a European Souslik colony – before our last overnight stay of the tour.

DAY SEVEN

Depending on your flight departure time/s we are more than happy to facilitate another early morning session at the Jackal hides – before your leave.

Group size: 3-4 + leader

Land only price:	820 EUR
Single supp:	60 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1070 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

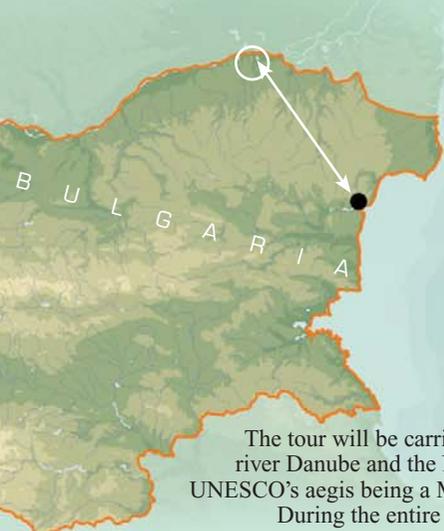
HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32

Golden Jackal

BEE-EATERS & ROLLERS PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

7 DAYS TOUR
4th–10th May 2019

Best Time: **May – September**
Ask for more tour dates.



The tour will be carried out in close proximity of the majestic river Danube and the Nature Reserve Srebarna, which is under UNESCO's aegis being a Monument of the World Nature Heritage. During the entire sojourn we will be accommodated at the Pelican Birding Lodge.

The chief attraction will be the taking of photos from two hides positioned in such a way as to enable us take shots in the morning and in the afternoon. Hides are erected in close vicinity to a colony of **European Bee-eater** and next to a breeding pair of **European Roller**.

The colony proper is located in a little valley covered with grassy vegetation and with scattered shrubs and little grooves. At a distance of about 200 m from the colony there is a village fountain. This fountain is a real crowd-puller for the thirsty birds from the valley, and they are not so few species: all species of woodpeckers with the exception of the Three-toed Woodpecker, the **Black-headed, Ortolan and Corn buntings**, the **Lesser Gray, Woodchat** and the **Red-backed Shrike**, the **Golden Oriole, Roller, Hoopoe, Turtle Dove, Common Whitethroat** and **Lesser Whitethroat, Barred Warbler, Hawfinch**, etc.

Only at several minutes drive by a car from the Lodge is the Srebarna Reserve where we will have the chance to photograph the **Dalmatian** and the **White pelicans** (mainly in flight), **Penduline Tit, Great Reed Warbler** and many other species.

The rich biodiversity in the area will also offer opportunities for macro photography. There are very good opportunities to take shots of the **Golden Jackal**. The weather in May is not so hot in Bulgaria, we expect daily temperatures around 25° Celsius, mornings will be cooler.

FIRST DAY. Landing at Bucharest or Varna Airport and transfer to the village of Vetren, municipality of Silistra, where we will be accommodated at the Pelican Birding Lodge for 7 nights.

DAY TWO TO SIX. Six days wildlife photographing in the area.

DAY SEVEN. Depending on the flight schedules – last photographing in the area and transfer to the respective airports.

Group size:	2–3 + leader
Land only price:	1200 EUR
Single supp:	120 EUR
Deposit:	150 EUR
Individuals:	1350 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch where and when is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR: See page 32



European Roller



European Bee-eater

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ABOUT OUR WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY HIDES

We offer professionally constructed photography hides which are permanent zero impact timber fixtures sourced from local sustainable sources. The use of natural resources from managed woodlands offers the perfect opportunity to capture birds and mammals within their natural and undisturbed habitat. Background, viewpoint and lighting have all been carefully considered to offer our customers the optimum experience. Our hides are most suitable for all levels of photography: from novice to expert.

The hides are located in North-Eastern Bulgarian in the village of Vetren within the Srebarna Nature Reserve region. They are designed and sited specifically to allow you to focus on some of the area's most attractive bird and mammal species; Bee-eaters, Rollers, Hoopoe & the Golden Jackal. Our accommodation base www.pelican-birding-lodge.com is just a couple of hundred meters from all hides and only 150 km from two international airports: Bucharest airport (Romania) & Varna airport (Bulgaria).

BEE-EATERS, ROLLERS & HOPOE HIDES

Quantity: two

Capacity: 3 persons per hide

Specialism: European Bee-eater, European Roller & Hoopoe

The European Bee-eater colony proper is located nearby in a small grassy shrub-bedded valley of wavering pasture, within the colony there is a breeding pair of European Roller. For two years now a breeding pair of Hoopoe has nested within sight of the hides too – often offering great photo opportunities of this species. The hides are ideally positioned to facilitate both morning and afternoon photography.

A village fountain (approx. 200 m away) is often still used by local villagers to water their cattle.

This fountain is a real crowd-puller for eager birds from the nearby valley seeking to quench their thirst. Several species that are usually seen include: Woodpecker (all species excepting the Three-toed Woodpecker), Black-headed, Ortolan and Corn buntings, Lesser Gray Woodchat, Red-backed Shrike, Golden Oriole, Roller, Hoopoe, Turtle Dove, Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Barred Warbler and Hawfinch – amongst many others.

GOLDEN JACKAL HIDE

Quantity: one

Capacity: 5 persons

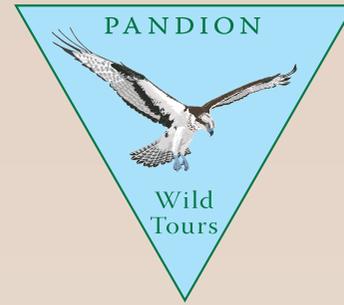
Specialism: Golden Jackal

Our Golden Jackal hide is situated just a couple of hundred meters away from our Bee-eater, Roller & Hoopoe hides. This permanent all wooden hide is organized as a feeding station. It comfortably accommodates up to 5 people. The hide can be used for both photography or for general wildlife observation. The photography embrasures are easily replaced with huge mirrored windows affording perfect views. Photography is also enabled through the windows. Our main focus here is the Golden Jackal – but the hide is also very often visited by birds and other mammals such as; Wild Boar, Roe Deer and European Hare. Birds often expected include; Golden Oriole, Eurasian Magpie, Common Wood Pigeon, Pheasants and Common Buzzard – among other birds of prey.

If we are lucky we may even see the White-tailed Sea-eagle!



Pandion Wild Tours Ltd is a Bulgarian tour operator with national license registration; N° PK-01-7122. We have been operating successfully in the field of wildlife, nature (conservation) and historical tourism for over 20 years. We are delighted to know that you are considering us to provide you with your vacation of choice.



HOW TO BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY

If you are interested in any of the holidays offered, you can book easily and hassle-free by sending us an e-mail at pandiond@einet.bg or by completing the user friendly online booking form found here:

www.birdwatchingholidays.com

Booking by e-mail: To reserve any of our wildlife holidays, please remember to indicate in your e-mail the name of your preferred tour, as well as the required tour dates. After receiving your request, we will send you an email regarding the availability of the selected tour and dates concerned. When we have confirmed availability with you, you will then be required to pay a deposit (The amount of deposit per person is shown on our website and also in the catalogue displayed alongside every tour). Please note; tour dates and reservations will not be confirmed without a deposit having first been paid in advance.

Once we have received your deposit we will send you your reservation notification by email with all necessary details confirmed. Your confirmation email will include full details of your booking and of any remaining balance to be paid. Full payment of the balance is due within 20 days before arrival.

Online booking: On our website www.birdwatchingholidays.com (our tours section) you can find all the info for, and availability of, all tours on offer. Once you have made your choice, click the “see more” button next to the tour that you wish to book. You will be taken to a new page displaying all details relevant to your holiday. Then; go to the bottom of this new page and click the “book now” button. Fill in the online booking form and press the “book now” button again to send your details. After receiving your request we will send you an email regarding the availability of the selected tour and dates. Once we have confirmed availability with you by email, you will be required to pay a deposit (The amount of deposit per person is shown on our website and also in the catalogue displayed alongside every tour). When we have received your deposit we will send you a reservation acknowledgement by email with your details confirmed. Your confirmation email will include not only, full details of your booking, but also of the remaining balance due to be paid. Full payment of the balance is due within 20 days before arrival.

For full Terms and Conditions, please check the “how to book” section of our website:

www.birdwatchingholidays.com

PELICAN BIRDING LODGE

BULGARIA

Pelican Birding Lodge is located in the village of Vetren, close to the town of Silistra. Vetren is situated at two kilometres from the River Danube, and close to the internationally important Managed Nature Reserve “Lake Srebarna”, a UNESCO heritage site.

The environs along the Danube attract a wide range of birdlife throughout the year. Lake Srebarna is world-famous for a colony of the world-threatened Dalmatian Pelicans, and many other interesting and rare species, which prefer a wetland habitat.

The lodge has been purpose-built in a local and traditional architectural style. It has 7 en suite rooms with hot water, heating, air conditioning, television and internet access. The lodge also has a large “mehana” (tavern), where you can relax and consume your drinks and meals, or just sit down and relax after a day out.

Pelican Lodge is situated in a beautiful natural setting, offering you tranquillity, a warm Bulgarian welcome, and a range of outdoor holiday activities. Close to the Lodge is a small wood, which abounds with bird song throughout the year. The gardens and woodlands are important not only for birds, as they attract butterflies, damsel- and dragonflies, mammals and rare plants, too. In nearby areas, the calls of European Jackals are regularly heard. Vetren village is an ideal starting point for cycling in the beautiful surroundings or for enjoying freshwater fishing along the Danube and inland lakes. Other possibilities are visits to archaeological and historical sites, local folklore, traditional Bulgarian cuisine, and world-famous wines, and other local drinks.

For more information visit:

<http://www.pelican-birding-lodge.com>

HOW TO REACH THE LODGE:

The lodge is situated in north-east Bulgaria, at 440 km from Sofia, 160 km from Varna and 210 km from Bucharest (Ro) international airports. If you travel from Sofia, you follow the international highway Sofia-Ruse-Tutrakan-Silistra. 15 km before Silistra town, you turn to the left, following the road sign pointing towards the village of Srebarna, pass it by and after 5 km driving you will be reaching the village of Vetren. From Bucharest you follow the international highway Bucharest(Ro)-Ruse(BG)-Tutrakan-Silistra. After Ruse you reach Vetren Village, following the instruction above. From Varna town you follow the international highway Varna-Dobrich-Ruse. 5 km before Silistra town you turn to the left, following the road sign pointing towards the town of Ruse. After about 16 km you turn right, following the road sign pointing towards the village of Srebarna, and after 5 km driving the village of Vetren follows.



CONTACTS:

Vetren village, 16 Dunav str., Silistra town district

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Tel/fax: 00359 2 9630436

E-mails: pelicanbirding@abv.bg, pandiond@einet.bg

Skype: [pelicanbirdinglodge](https://www.skype.com/user/pelicanbirdinglodge)

[pandion-d](https://www.skype.com/user/pandion-d)

web: <http://www.pelican-birding-lodge.com>

<http://www.birdwatchingholidays.com>

PELICAN BIRDING LODGE

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY & ACCOMMODATION

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